THE USE OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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Senior high school students are expected to have a good speaking skill, meanwhile their ability to speak English is very low especially in term of fluency. Therefore, teachers need an alternative method to teach speaking skill that is called Problem based Learning. The objective of this study is to know the application of problem based learning as teaching method in improving students' speaking ability and students' achievement in speaking English. The action research was carried out in some steps. Those steps were pre-elimination test, conducting the cycles starting with planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and post-test. As data collection instruments, I used observation sheets, questionnaire, interview, and self and peer assessment of the students. The implementation of this method was reflected in the classroom activity, students self and peer assessment, questionnaire, interview, and observation sheets. The result of the study showed that there were significant improvements of students' speaking ability after being taught by problem based learning. They also enjoyed the activities in class by having a discussion, sharing, and cooperation with their friends. In addition, the students gave positive opinion, response, and interest toward the implementation of problem based learning method. Therefore, the students' speaking ability was increased. Based on the result above, it can be concluded that this method gave positive contribution to the improvement of the students' speaking ability. This method is beneficial to help the students to learn to speak English in more enjoyable way.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the four skills that should be mastered beside listening, reading and writing. Speaking has an important role in daily life that is to convey someone's mind directly. It influences someone's performance in many aspects, such as social, politic, bussiness and education. A good presentation comes from a good presenter who can speak effectively in front of many people.

Making students speak English is a difficult job for English teachers. It needs a long process of practice and learning. Students of foreign language learners see that their native language is completely different from English while an opportunity to learn English and practice it in their real life is very limited in time and space. Therefore, they need more practice to speak English.

Considering the importance of speaking skill, the Indonesian government states that students should master this skill fully, not only the theory of speaking itself but also the practice.

The latest curriculum, curriculum of 2013, recommends the use of scientific approach in its teaching learning process. Furthermore, it suggests the application of teaching methods such as project based learning, Problem Based Learning, and discovery learning. These new methods are much different from the common method used before. These methods emphasize on the process of learning, not the outcome of it. The center of teaching learning itself is the students not a teacher anymore.

One of the methods offered by 2013 curriculum is Problem Based Learning. Yew (2009:11) states that Problem Based Learning is a learning approach that seeks to create a learning environment where students learn in the context of meaningful problems, actively constructing mental models in the process, coconstructing ideas with peers in a collaborative fashion and developing self-directed learning skills in the process. Thus, PBL brings together four fairly new insights into learning, namely that learning can be considered a constructive, self-directed, collaborative, and contextual activity.

Another source mentions that Problem-based learning (PBL) is focused experiential learning organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, real-world problems (IMSA 2008:1). Based on the definitions above, we can conclude that Problem Based Learning is a method using problems as an approach to train the students to think critically when they face a problem. Besides, this method also teaches them how to work in a group.

Therefore, the writer is challenged to find out whether Problem Based-Learning method can be one of the alternatives to improve students' speaking ability or not. I hope this study will help the teacher as a tutor and educator to improve their students' ability in their speaking skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Related to the definition of speaking, (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997) in Florez (1999:1) say that "speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information." In addition, Hornby (2005: 1467) states that "Speaking is used to show that what you are saying is true in general, to convey the ideas, and to have a conversation with somebody about something." Based on those statements, it can be inferred that speaking is the ability to use a language orally or say things that cannot go back and be changed except with repeating it. In another word, speaking is the key to communicate.

2.1 Teaching Speaking

There are three theories about language learning (Thornbury, 2005: 38) that can be applied in teaching speaking, that are behaviourist, cognitivist and sociocultural theory. Behaviorist theory emphasizes its method on repeated reinforcement through modeling. While cognitivist theory sees that learning is a movement from controlled to automatic processing which applied the conscious attention to the learning of individual stages through repeated aviation (Thornbury, 2005: 38). The last and more perfect than the previous is

sociocultural theory, all learning is mediated through social and cultural activity whereby the teacher interacts with the learners to provide a supportive framework within the learners, so that they can extend their present competence that is called by assisted performance (Thornbury, 2005: 38).

2.2 Curriculum of 2013

This curriculum was made based on the national education purpose; thinking pattern arrangement founded on students' necessities, developing and intensifying material, reinforcing the teaching learning process, and adjusting students' and teachers' task.

The expectations of this curriculum are developing students' critical thinking, cooperativeness, awareness towards their surroundings, responsibility of their task, and developing students-centred learning.

2.3 Problem based Learning

The PBL curriculum was develop in order to stimulate learners, assist them in seeing the relevance of learning to their future life, maintain their motivation towards learning in high level, and to show the learners to be responsible. The use of PBL has expanded from medical study to various education areas such as science, law, math, education, economic, business, social studies, engineering, etc.

Problem Based Learning uses "real world problems and tasks as the initiative objective in constructing knowledge and enhancing learning experience" (Tai and Yuan: 2007:1). Whereas Addalla and Gaffar (2011:1) states that "PBL education strategy is characterized by using patient's problem as a motive for students learning, to acquire knowledge of basic and clinical sciences related to that problem and acquire problem solving skills". Problem Based Learning can be described as "an instructional strategy in which students confront conceptually ill-structured problems and strive to find meaningful solutions" (Rayne and Symons 2005:6).

2.4 Component of PBL

Based on Rayne and Symons (2005: 6) there are some components in Problem Based Learning which will be explained as follows:

a. *Group Work.* Students work together in small groups and provide a framework in which students can test and develop their level of understanding of the material.

b. *Problem Solving.* The problems given in a PBL environment are often daily problem means that they face it every time in their life that need enquiry and critical analysis to solve it.

c. *Discovering new knowledge.* In order to find a meaningful solution, students will have to seek new knowledge.

d. *Based on the real world.* The main emphasis is to encourage students to start thinking like an expert early on in their careers, thereby easing them to solve their daily problem in their real life.

2.5 Implementation of PBL

Abdalla and Gaffar (2011:15) state that there are three steps in implementing PBL in teaching learning process.

a) First session of PBL

The purpose of this phase is to discuss the objectives of Problem Based Learning which include challenging students' knowledge and experience in order to solve the problem given to them. In this phase, the group has to set up their roles and responsibilities in group discussion including leader of the group, secretary and also member of the group. The duration of this session should be 1-2 hours. Following the first session of PBL, students will have several days to study individually to manage the task given by the teacher.

b) Second session of PBL

The aim of this session is to share what students have learned individually before to solve the problem. The duration of this session should be 1-2 hours. Meanwhile the objectives of this session are train them to be active thinker, cooperate with others, responsible for the task given to them, learn how to inform others and gat an early feedback on result of learning process.

c) Third session of PBL

The duration of the last session should be 1-2 hours. The aim is to create the discussion forum where the students can ask the expert concerning to the problem given before. They have to share their result of group discussion in front other groups to get a feedback from them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The researcher applied the classroom action research and took a part as a teacher for 32 students of X MS 4 of SMA N 1 Muntilan in the academic year of 2013-2014 as the subject of the study. From nine classes of all students in grade tenth, this class was chosen as the subject of the study because it was the most managable class. The research was conducted in three cycles as an effort to improve the students' speaking skills. The three cycles were called as cycle 1, cycle 2 and cycle 3.

In this research, the researcher applied the four phases of Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (2010:8) in each cycle. The phases are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The design of this research is presented in the figure and explanation below:
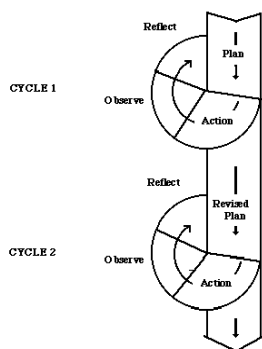

Figure 1. Action Research Process

The action research consists of four phases as follows:
1. Planning

Planning is the first step of the research procedure. The researcher made possible plans covering other research members' opinion, suggestion, and expectation and materials to overcome the reading problems. The teachers'

and the students' opinion and suggestion were obtained through interviews. The materials and other sources of all about reading were collected based on related references and experience.
2. Acting

The action that had been planned in the planning step was applied here. In this research, the treatment was using "Directed Reading-Thinking Activity Strategy" to enhance their ability in reading comprehension.
3. Observation

Observation is the activity of collecting the data to identify to what extent the result of "acting" reaches the objective. The data being taken were qualitative data. They were taken from observation checklist and field note.
4. Reflection

Reflection is the activity of evaluating critically about the progress or change of the students, class, and also teacher. In this step, the researcher or collaborator observed whether the "acting" activity resulted any progress, what progress happens, and also about the positives and negatives, and so on.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data result from the pre-test up to the post-test showed that the students' speaking skill increased relatively stable along the process of implementing *Problem based Learning* in the three cycles. The final result of the test deals with the total score the students gained before and after using *Problem based Learning*. In the pre-test result, the students had problems in every aspect of speaking skill. In short, pronounciation control was very poor and they could not produce utterances fluently. The lack of vocabulary variation was also the problem. It means that the vocabulary variation was not enough sufficient to express the idea. It influenced to the result of comprehension component, while the students couldn't show the performance as the teacher's expectation.

After conducting cycle one and cycle two, the result of the post-test increased. The figure below shows the improvement of each component:
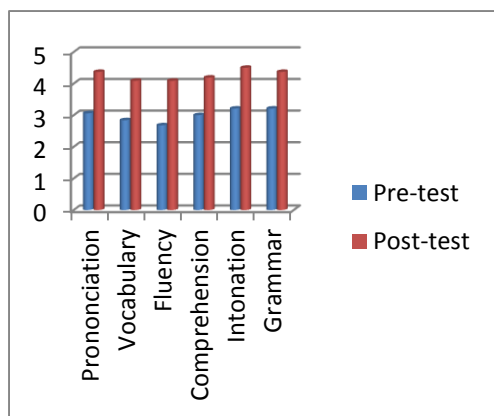

Figure 1. Students' improvement

By using *Problem based Learning*, the researcher improved students' speaking in all aspects. All students got good scores in grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.

The improvement of each aspect of speaking skill is explained as follows:

1) Grammar

The target tenses that the students should be learnt in this material was simple past tense, because this chapter was about narrative story. They basically knew structure, but they could not implement it perfectly in speaking. They verb two or added –ed in the end of the verb. They often mixed the structure when spoke in English. After doing the cycles, the result of grammar aspect increased. The result showed that the students understood how to use simple past tense correctly. They also corrected their grammar by themselves when they did mistakes in performing a converstation.

2) Vocabulary

The pre-test data showed that the students had limited vocabularies to express their idea and feeling. They only used familiar and simple words in their sentences, even some of them forgot the simple word because of their nervousness. By using PBL method, the students got challenge to enrich themselves about the vocabulary variaton in order to make a good conversation and for the sake of their discussion. After doing several practices using PBL method, the test result increased from a test to another. The students' vocabulary achievement improved because they got new vocabulary from the treatment also the teacher's explanation and they accustomed to speak in English. They also tried to find new vocabulary from their dictionary or asked the teacher.

3) Fluency

Fluency is one of the most important and difficult aspects to be achieved in speaking skill. The result of the pre-test showed that fluency got a second grade of low score. As stated above in the questionnaire result, the students admitted that they rarely spoken English English in their real life, so it influenced their fluency. After given the treatment, the students' fluency increased. It was influenced by their habit in speaking when they practiced in discussion. They also had to present their discussion result in front of their classmate. It trained them a lot to speak. So, since they had a lot of practices, their fluency achievement in the post-test was much better than in the pre-test.

4) Comprehension

The next significant improvement was in the comprehension aspect. Comprehension is the ability to understand the sentence or content of the story completely and be familiar with the situation, fact etc. The result of the research showed that the students' comprehension increased. In the beginning of the treatment, the students did many mistakes related to the teacher's instruction. They almost didn't understand what they should do and don't. After the treatment, the students could understand what the teacher said and got the point of information related to the topic discussed. In this aspect, the writer found out how good they understood a spoken language.

5) Pronunciation

The students' pronunciation got the low score in pre test. They did many mistakes though they used a familiar and simple words. After given the treatment, the students' achievement increased. The students' pronunciation improved because they learned how to pronounce the

words correctly since their wrong pronunciation were corrected in the cycle one, two and three.

6) Intonation

Students could maintain their intonation quite well since pre-test. They could differentiate how to say a statement sentence or affirmative sentence. So that, the writer did not have any difficulties in helping them to improve the intonation aspect in speaking English. After conducting the third cycle, students' improvement in intonation aspect were high and they could apply it in conversation unintentionally.

4.1 The Advantages of Using Problem Based Learning Method in Teaching Speaking

The use of *Problem Based Learning* Method had several advantages towards the students' speaking skill. *First*, the most important is it improves the students' speaking skill in oral communication. *Problem Based Learning* method forced the students to speak up only in English. All of the students must say something or must give opinion about something. This condition that made the class become conducive for the students to learn speaking English. All of the students could be more active in class, it increased students' oral communication especially in English. The result is students' speaking skill is getting better.

Second, the use of Problem Based Learning method in teaching speaking could increase students' motivation and interest in learning English especially for speaking skill. By using a fun treatment and not too formal, students will like the learning atmosphere. Students will enjoy those condition so that their interest in English improves. Besides, the problem used in discussion was a daily problem that they often face. It made them more active in discussing the solution of the problem. In addition, all the activities that were involved in this strategy gave the students an experience in speaking English so that they could be more confident in performing their speaking. Students also will not feel shy when conveying their ideas.

Third, Problem Based Learning method is a technique that requires cooperation with other students in group. Students learn how to work together to achieve the goal and how to solve the problem. Thus, by conducting Problem Based Learning method, students learn social skills such as cooperation, teamwork, and communication skills which are useful in their future life. Moreover, this method also required students to think critically before decided what they have to do, so that, it will help them to be a critical thinker.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on data interpretation and discussion presented in the previous, I draw the following conclusions:

According to the data analysis in chapter 4, it can be drawn some conclusion that: First, the purpose of the study is 'to find out how Problem Based Learning is used in teaching speaking to the tenth graders of senior high school 01 Muntilan in the academic year 2013/2014.' It is based on the result of analysis from the observation sheets about students' behavior during the treatment, and also the analysis of the questionnaire. The implementation of Problem Based Learning itself was easy and students seemed to like this method based on the questionnaire analysis. This method was applied in class and the students played their role seriously, discussed the solution of the problem together with their group member and constructed the argumentation to back up their solution before they told their solution in front of the class. The application of this method could improve students' speaking ability. The first purpose was accomplished well.

Second, the Problem Based Learning method improves students' achievement in speaking after being taught by this method. Students' improvement in speaking can be seen from the result of pretest and posttest. It can be seen from the aspects of speaking skill which covered grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and intonation. The result from the test proved that students' speaking ability was getting better after using this game.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions which are presented to improve students' speaking skill.

Firstly, working together in group is one of the methods that can be applied in teaching speaking. Teachers should have interesting techniques to teach their students, for example by using discussion technique. Students need to train their speaking skill by speaking English anytime and anywhere. By using Problem Based Learning method that provides problem to be discussed, it will help the students to be more talkative in their environment and train them to be critical. This method was just an example to encourage students in learning speaking. Teacher should be able to find another method which is interesting.

Furthermore, students need to be more active in learning speaking. They have to be active in every opportunity that requires them to speak in English. Practicing is the best way to learn English, it will make them more fluent in speaking and improve their self-confidence. It will be easier if they have a discussion with their friends and share everything they think of.

Lastly, for other researchers who conduct an action research in speaking skill area, they can explore any other methods to apply in English speaking classroom. Moreover, they can do further research on this topic in the future.

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