PEER TUTORING TECHNIQUE: HELPING STUDENTS REDUCING FEAR IN IMPROVING SPEAKING ABILITY

Paulina
University of Muhammadiyah Gresik
me.paulina@yahoo.com

Abstract
The study was aimed to solve the problem in the speaking class dealing with the students fear and the bad quality of speaking ability using peer tutoring technique. The design of the study is Classroom Action Research (CAR) which involves 26 students assigned in intermediate speaking class in English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. The preliminary study conducted showed that students had a fear to speak in front of the class which resulted in their speaking skill quality. The study offered one cycle consisted of planning, observing, implementing, and reflecting. the cycle took two meetings. The students were divided into two groups of high speaking ability and low speaking ability. The two groups were divided again into small units called pair. In one pair, the high speaking ability students taught the low speaking ability students before they had individual presentation in front of the class. In the end of the cycle, the peer tutoring process showed that students achieved thyeir average score above the minimum passing level of 60, which was the criteria of success.

Key words: Peer tutoring, fear in speaking, speaking skill

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1. Background of the Study

The English communication is usually related to English spoken. We can communicate and understand someone when we have a conversation. Thus, students should improve their speaking ability by practicing English speaking regularly because English is important in our daily life and becomes a standardized language in international communication.

In improving the quality of pre-service teachers in communicating using English, some subjects are provided to support them in English communication. Speaking subject becomes the popular subject since it enhances their speaking ability. Speaking is considered to be the most important skill because it supports the communication activity, especially worldwide communication. Speaking can be said as an indicator for students to master the language

(Nunan, 1999). Moreover, students who have a good ability in speaking leads to a good academic advantage because a school achievement might depend on a good speaking skill (Kayi, 2006).

Students are given speaking skill subject from the first semester in line with other skill subjects, listening and reading. From the first semester, speaking is given through basic speaking subject. Here, students are expected to develop their ability to speak English in elementary level. In this subject, the English activity tends to have some fun activities. The students are freely to express some topics without considering too much on their grammatical mistakes and lack of vocabulary. While in intermediate speaking subject, students are expected to develop their speaking ability in intermediate level. Here, students should start

concerning on their grammar and vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, the activities in intermediate speaking are more vary which require students to explore their brain anxiousity and own confidence.

Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety contexts" (Chaney, 1998). In speaking skill, learners need to develop some skills, such as producing connected speech, the ability to interact, talking round gaps in knowledge, speaking in a range contexts, and balancing accuracy and fluency. These skills require learners to interact with other speakers, including respond use the language to the persons they are talking to.

There are eight processes in speaking situation. They are talking to someone face to face, talking to someone on the phone, a learner answering a question in class, someone giving a speech, taking part in a meeting, an exchange between a customer and an assistant in a shop, asking stranger for directions, and the last is chatting to friends. The first process, talking to someone face to face, is kind of peer activity related to this study. Matera (2008) stated that putting students into a group or pair can get them into more speaking practice. The group or pair can be decided at the beginning of the class so that it won't take a long time in every meeting to decide the group or pair. This group or pair can continue practicing speaking after the class so that they have more practice with their partner. In addition, learners also can learn some English expression.

However, some fears might come to students who want to speak English in front of people. Some students are generally have own ideas to speak English in public, however somestimes they have problems in delivering their speech. This fear is sometimes called a speech anxiety that has to do with nervousness in preparing the way of speaking which can be solved by a good preparation and practice (Rybold, 2006). Rybold also stated some tips to relieve anxiety about speaking, such as preparing a healthy body, preparing the right mind, and practicing.

These students usually get embarrased because of their poor pronunciation and grammar, even in their accent (Marcelo, 2012). Students might not know how to build English sentences in front of their friends, or in many cases they are affraid to be the part of their friends' joke after delivering their English spoken. The fear of students in making mistakes happens sometimes because they get anxious which lead them to lose their capability to speak comfortably. Lack of vocabulary can be a reason also students are afraid to speak English which discourages them to start a conversation (Laskowsky, 1996). However, if students are concern too much in having a good vocabulary to speak up, they will end up waiting for years to have a courage in speaking English.

A pre-eliminary study was conducted to know students confidence in intermediate speaking subject by conducting interview to some students. The result of the interview shows a fear and feeling inconfidence appear in most of students. The fact that students were still shy to deliver opinion they have in front of the class

happened because the students who currently have lower ability in speaking have a big fear to be humiliated by others with higher ability in terms of grammar and vocabulary. As a result, students with higher speaking ability often dominate the class.

Students' achievement in speaking is really poor because of their big fear in speaking performance. Students usually speak with inappropriate eyes contact which uncomfortably see their audiences. It leads to their unconfident situation which results in poor fluency, misspronunciation, grrammatical error, and lack of vocabulary.

Seeing the fact, certain strategy is tried to be implemented to overcome the problem, such as doing personal approach by the lecturer to the students. The lecturer needs to ask and recognize their personal problems in doing speaking performance in order to overcome the problems. Students need a very extra time and a partner to talk and discuss about their learning problems to find a solution. However, working with one-on-one students in class requires much time for the lecturer. To find a partner for students to discuss and solve their problems especially their big fear in speaking, a peer tutoring strategy comes up to be the best way to be implemented.

Peer tutoring is a kind of strategy to involve two students or more to have activities like tutor and tutees (Topping, 1996). It helps students to learn better and more quickly because peer tutoring provides students to have more opportunities to discuss about kinds of learning they want and they need, more

opportunities to have and ask questions without being embarrased in front of the class so that they can talk and practice bravely without any fear.

Peer tutoring means learning together (Falchikov, 2002). It means having a or some partners to support and improve learning process. Here, students can learn from each other, normally within the same class. Peer tutoring involves overwhelming experience in a study which values the tutorial process (Beasly, 1995).Vigotsky (1962) stated that skills can be developed greater in peer collaboration. Moreover, peer tutoring technique can make students feel more comfortable in discussing or working on their task in their peer group because of less power dynamic (Capossela, 1998).According to some tips stated by Rybold (2006) above that his last tips is practicing, requires students to practice in front of family or friends first before going to public, can be called a peer tutoring.

There are many benefits in doing peer tutoring. Falchikov (2002) stated that peer tutoring helps improving students skill and encouraging them to elaborate more on the skills, such as speaking skill. It also helps collegial relationships and increase participant students. The performance of students skill is developed highly from the partners' tutoring. They are also encouraged to responds for questions, improve academic achievement, improve effective practice, and improve vocabulary building. Previous research from Pressley & Hughes (2000) proved that peer tutoring works for all students who have

problems with paying attentions, learning, emotion and behavior. It also helps students who learn without any problem. Thus, peer tutoring may come up as an effective way to reduce fear and improve speaking skill quality.

Considering the background of the study above, the study focuses on how peer tutoring strategy reduce fear and improve speaking skill. The result of the study is expected to provide meaningful contribution for both theory and practice in English teaching and learning, especially in speaking. Theoretically, the study conducted is expected to enrich the theory development of peer tutoring as a speaking teaching strategy. Practically, it is hoped that this study can have beneficial improvement in language teaching, espeacially for language teachers and lecturers who have the similar problems in teaching speaking skill. In addition, the result of the study is expected to provide insights for language teachers and lecturers to solve the instructional problems in the class and to assist the students speaking ability in a best way. Moreover for students, it is hoped that they can take the benefits of the study in the form of finding a good way in mastering speaking skill.

This study focuses on the use of peer tutoring strategy to reduce fear and improve students' speaking ability. but, it will be deliminated specifically to the subjects. The subjects of the study are the fourth semester students from the evening class of English Education who are joining intermediate speaking class. There are 26 students. The subjects face their second year in studying English in English Education, Teacher Training and Education faculty, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. The subjects had some problems in their speaking ability. The problem they face is mostly about having fear to conduct speaking in front of the class which lead them into poor fluency, mispronunciation, grammatical error, and lack of vocabulary. As a result, the speaking achievement they got was very poor.

2. Method

A Classroom Action research was applied because it focused only on one particular classroom. This design was chosen to solve students' speaking problems in reducing fear and improving speaking skill. According to Latief (2010), the goal of Classroom Action Research is not only lies on the improvement of the quality of teaching practice in certain class by using creative and innovative way, but also elevate students' motivation and create joyful classroom atmosphere.

In this study, the role of the researcher is a teacher-researcher because the researcher does not only conduct the research, but also teach and implement the peer tutoring technique in the speaking class. Thus, the researcher is responsible in preparing the lesson plan, materials, and assessment for students in speaking class.

The study was conducted at English Department classroom of Teacher Training and Education faculty in University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. The subjects of the study is the fourth semester students from the evening class who are joining Intermediate Speaking class. There are 26 students in the

class. The selection of the subject of this study is based on the results of the preliminary study that indicated most students have big fear in their speaking performance which leads to a poor achievement.

Research Procedure

This study involved a cycle which consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The result of the cycle determined the needs of the following cycle in order to get the problem solved. The action was stopped if the objective of the study is achieved. The procedure of the study including the preliminary study was described as follow.

Preliminary Study (Problem Identification)

The preliminary study was conducted at the 4 first meetings of the study. Observation, interview, questionnaire, and speaking test were used as instruments.

The questionnaire for the students consist of twelve questions which covered their attitude and learning style in speaking class. There are two sections in the questionnaire. In the first section, it involves students' responses in the teaching of speaking, interest in English, learning method, classroom atmosphere, and students' participation and motivation in speaking. In the second section, it involves the students' difficuties in speaking including readiness, ideas development, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. The result of the questionnaire proved that students have a big interest in learning English. However, the result also showed that students felt inconfident in speaking English. It showed that

students still felf hesitate to speak up in front of the class. In speaking class, their readiness is still low in preparing for speaking activities.

Furthermore, observation and interview were conducted in order to support the result of the questionnaire. The observation was conducted in the first four meetings in order to see the process of students in learning speaking. Moreover, some students were also interviewed about their English learning, especially their diffulties in speaking. Surprisingly, the result of observation and interview showed that most strudents have a good interaction in learning speaking. It has an accordance to the result of the questionnaire that also showed a big interest of students in learning English, especially speaking. The result of interview also showed that some students have difficulties in preparing speaking presentation in front of the class. They had a big fear in doing the presentation because they have difficulties in mastering grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. They felt shy if they can't speak well in front of their class.

The preliminary test was conducted to measure students' ability in speaking. The aspects of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content comprehension are underlying in the test. The test was conducted under the topic 'Songs I like'. The test required students to choose one song about humanity, family or friendship. After that, students had to tell the class about the story of the song and the message they learn from the song. The test indicated that students had average achievement below the minimum passing level which is 60.

Planning

In the planning stage, the teaching strategy of speaking, the lesson plan, and the criteria of success were designed. The procedure of implementing peer tutoring were constructed also. The implementation of peer tutoring strategy was begun by dividing 26 students into two different groups. The first group consists of 13 students with a high ability in speaking. The second group is 13 students with low speaking ability. Then, the students were paired. Each pair consists of one high speaking ability student and one low speaking ability student. After that, the topic was given. They discussed the topic together, even the students with low speaking ability could talk about their difficulties to their partner so that their partner could help them to solve the problem. Each student spoke about the topic to their partner. They had peer correction about their speaking performance. Finally, each student spoke up in front of the class after having pair correction with the partner.

The lesson plan is also created in order to give clear and effective guideline in the teaching process through the implementation of peer tutoring strategy. The lesson plan covers the clear instructional indicators and objectives, instructional materials, instructional media, learning activities, model and method of teaching, and also assessment.

In this planning, the criteria of success is also determined based on the improvement of students' achievement in speaking performance. The achievement is based on the score and the active participation during speaking learning.

Implementing

The implementation of the planning is based on the lesson plan designed. During the teaching process, the researcher took the role as the researcher, the practitioner or the lecturer, and the observer. The observation was conducted during the process of learning to see how strudents learn speaking through the strategy planned.

Observing

In observation, the lecturer whenever as the researcher kept on making the records of the process by making field note and observation checklist as the instruments to support this step. The purpose of this step is to know how well the peer tutoring strategy implemented can reduce fear and improve students' speaking achievement.

Reflecting

This reflection step is the last step of the whole process. In this step, all the actions were evaluated and reflected. The result of peer tutoring strategy implementation was analyzed in order to know the effect of using the strategy on speaking teaching and learning process. The data analysis in this step is not only to determine the actions whether they are successful or unsuccessful but also to find out a deep explanation about the implementation of peer tutoring.

The result of the analysis is reflected on the criteria of success. If the result achieves the criteria of success, it indicates that the study is successful. Meanwhile, if it is failed, then the researcher has to go to the next cycle and revise the strategy and the lesson plan

3. Finding and Discussion

The implementation of peer tutoring strategy took 2 meetings with two topics. Each meeting was started by explaining the topic and the goal of the study, followed by the deep explaining about the practice of peer tutoring. Students were divided into two groups of high speaking ability and low speaking ability. Then, the groups were divided again into small units called pair. The high quality students were paired with the the low ability students. The first meeting of the implementation was under the topic of 'Holiday'. Students were required to imagine their dream holiday places outside their own country. Students were required to tell information about the place, such as weather, people, traditional food and beverage. Students were given 30 minutes to prepare and practice with their peer tutor. The practiced was started by the low speaking ability students. Their peer tutoring process was observed and most of students spent more than the given time. Moreover, there were eight pairs that repeated the peer tutoring process many times.

After having peer tutoring, each student was required to speak individually in front of the class to tell their holiday places. Their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content comprehension were the main concern to achieve their criteria of success. The content and the fluency took the most concerned parts. Some students still have problems in pronunciation, fluency and grammar. They found some difficulties in the use of modal and past tense. For example, *I must to go there again, and last month I visit Australia.*

However, the average result of the students' speaking performance was mostly above the minimum passing level. Only three students got the total score under 60. Some oral questions were asked to students about the peer tutoring process. They showed that this strategy can help them to improve their speaking skill and their readiness to speak in front of the class. They expected to have this strategy along the speaking course. One of them stated 'I can speak more fluently because I already practiced with my partner'.

In the second meeting, the peer tutoring process was repeated same as the first meeting but using the different topic which is movie review. Students were partnered with the same partner. The topic required students to tell their favorite movie and give comments of the characters inside.

This meeting students spent 28 minutes to do the peer tutoring process. After having individual presentation in front of the class, surprisingly, their average scores were all above the minimum passing level. Their average score was 67,64. The further interview to students about the peer tutoring strategy was conducted and students felt great to have this strategy to reduce their fear and improve their speaking ability. However, students expected that the lecturer can concern more to their improvement by applying this strategy during the speaking course.

After having a good result in reducing fear and improving speaking ability, peer tutoring comes up as the best strategy to be implemented in speaking class. The result

proved some theories mentioned that peer tutoring helps students to encourage and improve their skill. In addition, the class condition can be more active and achieve the goal of student-centered learning which requires students to participate more during the learning process (Falchikov, 2002).

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