

**IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL
BY USING COMMUNICATION GAMES
(A Classroom Action Research at the Second Semester of English Department's
students of State Polytechnic of Madiun in the Academic Year of 2014/2015)**

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ABSTRACT

Teaching language consists of some aspects as the important part of transferring the knowledge and skill such as the skill of the lecturers to manage the process of teaching and learning as they play an important roles, choosing the methods or strategies, and designing the goal of the study. All their targets are based on how well they collaborate the methods and designs through the experiences and knowledge they have during the process of teaching and learning. Communication Games was chosen to know the advantages, disadvantages, strengths, and weaknesses in improving the speaking skill of the second semester students of English Department of Madiun State Polytechnic. The qualitative and quantitative data were used in this research. Qualitative data were taken from the scores of the pre-test and all cycles. The quantitative data were taken through interview and questionnaire. Based on the discussions and conclusions, communication games is recommended to improve the speaking skill of the second semester students of English Department of Madiun State Polytechnic.

Keywords: Communication Games, Speaking skill, and Teaching learning process

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an active language action from the language users that demand the real initiation in language employing to express self orally. It is very important for the students of English Department especially for those who are on the second semester as their books are in English, and the subjects are also delivered in English.

Unfortunately, the second semester's students of English Department, generally, do not feel confident in using English to communicate with their friends because they are afraid of making mistakes. Some of the students are not motivated to speak English as their friends will consider as a pride and show-off students. The other students are not creative in delivering their opinion as they have limited English vocabularies. They often speak very little because they just want to try their speaking skill. When they speak English, they often make mistakes in arranging, choosing, and pronouncing words. As a result, the listeners do not understand what they mean.

Teaching speaking is a very important part of foreign language learning, since oral communication seems to be more widely used than the written one. The ability of communication in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner at campus and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to teaching speaking rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is described the real life communication. With this aim, various speaking activities can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life.

Generally, there are some aspects of teaching which can influence students' speaking skills. They are lecturer, methods, and strategies A good strategy brings the significant

influence in the success of the process of teaching learning, especially in terms of improving students' speaking skill in the class. So, the effective way should be applied by the lecturers in achieving class objectives.

To help the lecturers in teaching speaking for university students, lecturer may use an interesting teaching way to present their teaching materials that also help them in creating a fun class. Besides, the students are motivated to practise their English without burden and force. They get the relax and fun occasion to express their ideas and opinion in English orally. They are also more creative to deliver their expression, thought, and opinion in good English such as arranging, choosing, and pronouncing words, and organizing sentences.

Communication Games are one of the good ways to guide students to communicate each other in a relax situation. Chen (2005: 2) states that Communication Games are a great way for people to help communicate and understand each other better while improving their communication skills, whether trying to help those in a classroom get to know one another better, or help encourage teamwork in a setting. They can be used in many grade levels and across circular areas. By providing the students with real life activities to communicate in English, they are given opportunities to practise their English communication skills in a low-stress environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols in a variety of contexts (Chaney, 1998: 13). Brown (2004: 167) states that speaking is very complex task to understand the nature of what appears to be involved. Speaking proficiency is depending on grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Tarigan (1985: 21) defines speaking as the capability to articulate the sound expressing and delivering thought, opinion, and wish.

Furthermore, Bygate (1987: 3) states that in order to achieve a communication goal through speaking, there are two aspects to be considered – knowledge of the language and skill in using this knowledge. Bukart (2006: 15) states that speaking involves three areas of knowledge as follows:

1. Mechanisms (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary)
It refers to using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation.
2. Functions (transaction and interaction)
It refers to knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction or information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction or relationship building)
3. Social and cultural rules and norms (turn taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, and relative roles of participants)
It refers to understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

Furthermore, Syakur (1987: 3) states that there are, generally, at least four components of speaking skill: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

1. Comprehension
Oral communication certainly requires a subject to respond to speech as well as to initiate it.
2. Grammar
It is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation, and to distinguish appropriate grammatical form in appropriate ones. The utility of grammar is also used to learn the correct way to gain expertise in a language in oral and written form.

3. Vocabulary

One cannot communicate effectively and express their ideas both orally and in written form if they do not have sufficient vocabulary. So vocabulary means the appropriate diction which is used in communication

4. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way students produce clearer language when they speak. It deals with phonological process that refers to the component of a grammar made up of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and pattern in language.

5. Fluency

Signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses. These signs indicate that the speaker does not spend a lot of time searching for the language items.

Communicative language teaching and collaboration learning serve best the student to learn to speak in the foreign language by interacting. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situation that requires communication. It will give students more opportunities to communicate each other using the foreign language. Teacher should be able to create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful task that promote oral language. This can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task (Nunan, in Kayi, 2006: 2). According to Brown (1994: 263), there are seven principles in teaching speaking: (1) focus on both fluency and accuracy; (2) provide intrinsically motivating techniques; (3) encourage the use of authentic language; (4) provide appropriate feedback and correction; (5) capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening; (6) give students opportunities to initiate oral communication; and (7) encourage the development of speaking strategies.

In line with the elaboration above, Kayi (2006: 7) states that the English language teachers should (1) provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge; (2) try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this aim, practice different ways of student participation; (3) reduce teacher speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time. Step back and observe students; (4) indicate positive signs when commenting on a student's response; (5) ask eliciting questions such as "what do you mean? how did you reach that conclusion?" in order to prompt students to speak more; (6) provide written feedback like "your presentation was really great. It was a good job. I really appreciated your efforts in preparing the materials and efficient use of your voice; (7) not correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech; (8) involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class; contact parents and other people who can help; (9) circulate around classroom to ensure that students are on the right track and see whether they need your help while they work in groups or pairs; (10) provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities; and (11) diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language

Gibbons states that Communication Games are activities set up in the classroom to create opportunities and purposes for verbal communication practise (Gibbon, in Herrell and Jordan, 2008: 94). Harmer adds that Communication Games are games which are designed to provoke communication between students frequently depend on an information gap so that one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, put things in the right order, or find similarities and differences between pictures (2003: 272). It means that Communication Games offer students a fun-filled and relaxing learning habit. After learning and practicing new vocabulary, students have the opportunity to use language in a non-

stressful way. While playing games, the learners' attention is not only on the language but also on the message. Communication Games are very useful in building up relationship with the group. The members of the group come closer to one another. Linguistically disadvantaged students are encouraged by the advantaged ones to speak freely (Hadfield, in Prayan 2007: 5)

Speaking activities is the most important part in performing the knowledge and ability of each student. Herrell and Jordan (2008: 95) state that there are four activities to promote Communication Games in the classroom. They are as follows:

1. Barrier Games

Two students sit back-to-back or behind the screen (barrier). One student is given a complete set of instructions that must be conveyed verbally to the second student, who completes the task.

2. Information Sharing

Each student has part of the information necessary to complete a task or solve a problem. They must share their information to accomplish the task.

3. Inquiry and Elimination

A small group of students work together. One student has a set of information that must be obtained by the others through questioning and elimination of irrelevant items. The group then decides the solution based upon their inquiry.

4. Rank Ordering

Students work together in small to suggest solutions to a problem and then reach consensus as to the rank order of the usefulness of each of the solutions.

Lee Su Kim (1995: 36) states that there are nine advantages of using Communication Games in language-learning process as follows:

1. They are learner centered.
2. They promote communicative competence.
3. They create a meaningful context for language use.
4. They increase learning motivation.
5. They reduce learning anxiety.
6. They integrate various linguistic skills.
7. They encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.
8. They construct a cooperative learning environment.
9. They foster participatory attitudes of the students.

Unfortunately, Lee Su Kim (1995: 37), there are five weaknesses of Communication Games as follows:

1. They generally focus on one language aspect to practice or improve in the class.
2. They can not be used for formal evaluation.
3. The teacher mainly observes the students rather than explains the materials and corrects the mistakes.
4. The class is difficult to be controlled.
5. The class is noisy.

Kathleen and Kenji (2004: 3-7) state that there are six types of speaking test; (1) reading aloud; (2) conversational exchange; (3) testing speaking using visual material; (4) oral interviews; (5) role play test; (group or pair activities).

Louma (2004: 59) states that speaking scores express how well the examinees can speak the language being tested. They usually take the form of numbers, but they also be verbal categories such as 'excellent' or 'fair'. Scale for assessing speaking must be related to the purpose of the test and the definition of the construct to be assessed.

Both Oller (1979: 321-323) and Richards and Renandya (2002: 222-223) adapted from the FSI to classify the proficiency description as follows:

1. Accent
 - a. Pronunciation frequently unintelligible.
 - b. Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent make understanding difficult, require frequent repetition.
 - c. "Foreign accent" requires concentrated listening and mispronunciation lead to occasional misunderstanding and apparent error in grammar and vocabulary.
 - d. Marked "Foreign accent" and occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.
 - e. No conspicuous mispronunciations, but would not be taken for a native speaker.
 - f. Native pronunciation, with no trace of "foreign accent"
2. Grammar
 - a. Grammar almost entirely inaccurate except in stock phrases.
 - b. Constant error showing control of very few major patterns and frequently preventing communication.
 - c. Frequent errors showing some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding.
 - d. Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns but no weakness that causes misunderstanding.
 - e. Few errors, with no pattern failure.
 - f. No more than two errors during the interview.
3. Vocabulary
 - a. Vocabulary in adequate for even the simplest conversation.
 - b. Vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas (time, food, transportation, family, etc.)
 - c. Choices of words sometimes inaccurate, limitations of vocabulary prevent discussion of some common professional and social topics.
 - d. Professional vocabulary adequate to discuss special interest; general vocabulary permits discussion of any non-technical subject with some circumlocutions.
 - e. Professional vocabulary broad precise; general vocabulary adequate to cope with complex practical problems and varied social situations.
 - f. Vocabulary apparently as accurate and extensive as that of an educated native speaker.
4. Fluency
 - a. Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.
 - b. Speech is very slow and uneven except for short and routine sentences.
 - c. Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be felt uncompleted.
 - d. Speech is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and groping for words.
 - e. Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptively non native in speech and evenness.
 - f. Speech on all professional and general topics and effortless and smooth as a native speaker's.
5. Comprehension
 - a. Understand too little for the simplest type of conversation.
 - b. Understand only slow, very simple speech on common social and touristic topics; requires constant repetition and rephrasing.
 - c. Understand careful, somewhat simplified speech when engaged in a dialogue, but may require considerable repetition and rephrasing.
 - d. Understand quite well normal educated speech when engaged in a dialogue, but requires occasional repetition and rephrasing.
 - e. Understand everything in normal educated conversation except for every colloquial or low-frequency items, or exceptionally rapid or slurred speech.

- f. Understand everything both in formal and colloquial speech rapid to be expected of an educated native speaker.

Gottlieb (1995: 17) states that the following scoring rubric is used to analyze and evaluate group or pairs activities test. It is also simple scoring rubric which is suitable to hold class action research especially on speaking. The total score will be multiplied by four to gain the score result of the test.

Table 1 the Scoring Rubric

Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
Comprehension	Cannot understand even simple conversation	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only "social conversation" spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speed although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions without difficulty.
Fluency	Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant; often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Understands everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless, approximately that of a native speaker.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary: comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses the wrong words: somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually impossible.	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make himself or herself understood.	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Always intelligible, though one is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
Grammar	Errors in	Grammar and	Makes	Occasionally	Grammatical

grammar and word order severe as to make speech virtually intelligible.	word-order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict himself or herself to basic patterns.	frequent errors of grammar and word-order which occasionally obscure meaning.	makes grammatical and/or word-order errors which do not obscure meaning.	usage and word-order approximate that of a native speaker.
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher applied Classroom Action Research (CAR). Harmer (2003: 414) states that Action Research is the name given to a series of procedures teacher can engage in, perhaps because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or alternatively, because they wish to evaluate the success and/or appropriation of certain activities and procedures.

Action research is described as a spiral steps and there are four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Lewis in McNiff, 1998: 22). In conducting this research, the design procedure will be adapted to other kind to fit the overall condition of this research. Basically the design consists of the four components as the one Lewin has.



There are two kinds of data which are used in this research, the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are in the form of students' scores. The data are students' scores from the beginning of the research to the end of the research. They are taken from the test. The qualitative data are collecting by the following techniques: observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

The subject of the research was the students of the second semester of English Department of State Polytechnic of Madiun in the academic year of 2014/2015. There were 27 students which consist of 11 boys and 16 girls.

RESEARCH RESULT

1. Cycle I

It had been stated that the second semester students of English department of state polytechnic of Madiun got some problems on speaking. They faced the problem on comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The suitable method chosen was communication games. It was used to make the goal of the research come true. The first cycle was used to describe the process of teaching and learning by using communication games in order to improve the students' skill on speaking. It was done in four steps such as; 1) planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

a. Planning

In this step, the researcher planned the lesson plans in order to achieve the goal. Communication games were chosen as the way to bring the students get out of their daily activity of the curriculum. It was chosen as it could make the students learn English

especially on speaking without any burden and in the relax situation. The lesson plans were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, inquiry and elimination; 3) using some pictures of the famous person, animal, place, and thing; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing spoken assessment.

b. Action

The action was done for four meetings. The first meeting, the researcher discussed about the pattern and the usage of simple present on full verb and linking verb version. The second meeting, the researcher explained the different function among verbs, adjective, noun and adverb. The third meeting the researcher explained and gave examples the use of the theories in the first and second meeting in order to compose sentences. In the fourth meeting, the researcher invited all the students to perform the descriptions in group in front of the class.

c. Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The observation consisted of three phases such as observing the class during communication games; interviewing the students after practicing communication games; and holding spoken test to know the improvement of the speaking indicators.

d. Reflecting

In the cycle I, the students said that the activities of communication games, inquiry and elimination, motivated them to learn English more especially on speaking. They cooperated well with their friends as it was done in groups. They helped each other to solve the difficulty and problem. Communication games in the cycle I also gave them a new experience in learning English as they could learn and practice their skill without any burden and in the relax situation. So the students can express their opinion, idea, and sentences freely.

2. Cycle II

The students faced some difficulties in choosing words, arranging words into sentences and pronouncing some words during the first cycle. The researcher continued the research to the second cycle which consisted of: 1) revised planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

a. Revised planning

Some students faced some difficulties in choosing words, and arranging words into sentences while the others were on pronouncing some words during communication games. The researcher made the lesson plans to solve the problems. They were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, barrier games; 3) using some pictures consisting different activities set in pairs; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing spoken assessment.

b. Action

The action was done for four meetings which were based on the revised planning. The first meeting, the researcher discussed about the way in choosing the suitable words based on the function and category and pronouncing them correctly. The second meeting, the researcher explained the way to arrange the words with the different category and function into sentences. The third meeting the researcher explained the way in arranging sentences to compose opinion and idea. In the fourth meeting, the researcher gave opportunities to all the students to apply communication games in group in front of the class.

c. Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The observation consisted of three phases such as observing the class during communication games; interviewing the students after practicing

communication games; and holding spoken test to know the improvement of the speaking indicators among the students.

d. Reflecting

The students said that the activities of communication games, barrier games, in the cycle II motivated them to learn English more especially on speaking. They cooperated well with their friends as it was done in groups. They helped each other to solve the difficulty and problem. Communication games in the cycle II also gave them a new experience in learning English as they could learn and practice their skill without any burden and in the relax situation. So the students can express their opinion, idea, and sentences well during communication games' activities.

3. Cycle III

Based on the evaluation of the second cycle, the researcher found some students made mistakes on pattern during arranging words into sentences especially on verbs such as using the wrong linking verb is, am, are, adding -s or -es and negative pattern on does or do. The researcher continued the research to the third cycle which consisted of: 1) revised planning; 2) acting; 3) observing; and 4) reflecting.

a. Revised planning

Some students faced some difficulties in using pattern of simple present during arranging words into sentences especially on using linking verbs is, am, are, using verbs such as adding -s or -es and negative pattern on does or do during communication games. The researcher made the lesson plans to solve the problems. They were as follows: 1) designing the indicators achieved; 2) choosing the activities, information sharing; 3) using some pictures consisting different places set in pairs; 4) arranging the students' task; and 5) designing spoken assessment.

b. Action

The action was done for four meetings which were based on the revised planning. The first meeting, the researcher reminded the pattern of simple present in full verb and linking verb form. The second meeting, the researcher explained the use of the pattern in sentences and gave many examples. The third meeting the researcher drilled the students in using the patterns in spoken skill. In the fourth meeting, the researcher gave opportunities to all the students to apply communication games, information sharing, in group and in front of the class.

c. Observing

The observation was aimed to know the influence of the method applied during the process of teaching and learning. The observation consisted of three phases such as observing the class during communication games; interviewing the students after practicing communication games; and holding spoken test to know the improvement of the speaking indicators.

d. Reflecting

The students said that the activities of communication games, information sharing, in the cycle III motivated them to learn English more especially on speaking. They cooperated well with their friends as it was done in groups. They helped each other to solve the difficulty and problem. Communication games in the cycle III also gave them a new experience in learning English as they could learn and practice their skill without any burden and in the relax situation. So the students can express their opinion, idea, and sentences well during communication games' activities.

1. The Improvement of Students Speaking Skill

The observation of cycle 1, 2, and 3 showed the indicators of speaking improvement during teaching and learning process. The proofs of the improvement were on: 1)

comprehension. Most of the students were not out of topics. They also could answer, make questions and response their friends during applying communication games; 2) fluency. Some students could deliver their descriptions and opinions fluently; 3) vocabulary. Most of the students could choose the words which related to the topic being discussed; 4) pronunciation. Most of the students could pronounce the words well. They also could deliver their sentences in good intonation and stress; 5) grammar. Some students can use the basic structures in arranging their words and sentences and the others could use intermediate pattern or even advance.

The students speaking scores improved from cycle to cycle which is shown in the following tables.

Table 2 The score of pre-test and post-tests

No	Score Level	Pre-test	Post-test	Post-test	Post-test
1.	Highest	76	80	84	88
2.	Average	60.1	62.6	66.	69
3.	Lowest	48	52	56	56

Table 3 The students' passing grade

No	Passing grade	The students' score	The sum of students			
			Pre-test	Cycle II	Cycle II	Cycle III
1.	60	Above passing grade	12	16	20	23
2.	60	Under passing grade	15	11	7	4

2. The strengths and the Weaknesses of Communication Games

The application of communication games from cycle to cycle showed the strengths such as: 1) cooperative. It made the students cooperation increase. They helped each other, communicated using English, and solved the problems that they faced during applying communication games; 2) interest. The students changed their perception that English was difficult. They thought that learning English was fun and interesting; 3) Student-centered. The students experienced the situation in which they held the roles to manage the class by themselves. They also learned English not only from the teacher but also from their friends.

Communication games also had some weaknesses such as: 1) crowded and noisy. The students sometimes lost control and were very noisy. This situation disturbed the next-door class which was very serious during the lesson; 2) difficult to control. The students were difficult to control when the felt on competition. They tried hard and spoke loudly to make the group became the winner. 3) dependence. Some students only relayed on their friends. They were passive as they thought that they could practiced as good as their friends.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, the researcher can conclude that communication games can show the improvement on students' speaking skill, become the effective way to teach and practice English on speaking skill, and has many strengths to make the students able to speak English well.

Communication games can improve the students speaking skill. The speaking skills such as comprehending the topics being discussed and communicated; delivering the idea, opinion, and description fluently; choosing the proper vocabularies related to the topic and co-text of the discussion and communication; pronouncing the words and expressing

sentences in good intonation and pronunciation; and using the correct grammar patterns during applying the communication games.

Communication games can be classified as an effective method to teach English on speaking. This method has clear and easy procedure to use and practice. It can make the students change the perception that English is not difficult to practice. It makes the students understand the material fast and practice it in fun and relax situation of the class.

Communication games have many strengths that are useful for the students and the lecturers. The lecturer can change the teacher centered into the student centered. He can make the students understand the material in a short time and directly with its practice.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that in general Communication Games can improve the speaking skill of the students of the second semester of state polytechnic of Madiun.

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