

## *The Fishbowl Strategy: An Effective Way to Improve Students' Speaking Ability*

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### **Abstract**

Speaking is one of essential language skills in communication. Language teachers are expected to bring an effective method in classroom to improve students' speaking skills. Based on the preliminary study in language classroom SMAN 12 Medan, teachers had limited knowledge of creative method in teaching speaking which can be integrated to curriculum. Thus, the use of Fishbowl strategy can provide opportunity in the form of Fish and the Bowl for each student to practice speaking in the classroom while considering about current curriculum. In the Fishbowl, each student can take a turn to deliver the ideas, and everyone has the equal chance to speak. This research focused on the implementation of Fishbowl strategy to improve speaking ability of 30 students from first grade of SMAN 12 Medan. The research methodology was a classroom action research. At the end of implementing fishbowl, the researcher gave the questionnaire to know students' perception toward the use of Fishbowl strategy. Based on the research findings, there were 26,6% successful students at the pre-test. After conducting fishbowl, 100% of students in the classroom had improvement in their speaking skill because each of them had more chance to speak up something related to the topic given

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In learning speaking, the students often find some problems. Ur (1996) in his teachings found some problems that can be found also in today speaking activity, namely *inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother-tongue use*. First is *Inhibition* in speaking activities; unlike reading, writing and listening, speaking requires some degree of real time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts. Second is *nothing to say*; even if students are not inhibited, they sometimes complain that they cannot think of anything to say; they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking. Next is *low or uneven participation*; only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; in a large group this means that each one will only have very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. The fourth is *Mother-tongue use*. In classes where all, or a number of, the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it: because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue. If they are talking in small groups it can be quite difficult to get some classes – particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones – to keep to the target language.

From the preliminary study that was done at SMAN 12 Medan on class XI IPA through observation, the writer found some problems dealing with their speaking activity in the classroom. During the speaking class, the strategy used in teaching and learning process was the same, and the problem that came in every meeting was almost the same. When the teacher asked students, most of them could not answer the questions, because when they wanted to answer the questions, some students had answered the questions before

them. Those made students felt bored and they sometimes kept silent while just some of them who always spoke up during the class. The teacher did not try to use another new fresh strategy so the students could be more active and had the time to speak English in the classroom. From all the data above, it can be said that mostly in every meeting, not all the students could speak up in the classroom because they did not have any chance to speak up in the classroom.

### **DEFINITION OF SPEAKING**

Speaking is a productive skill among the four skills. Speaking includes some aspects of language, such as pronunciation, grammar, accuracy, comprehensibility, and fluency. In learning language, one of the other points is communication that must be actively learned to perform in different roles and situation. According to Richards and Renandya (2002) in their book "Methodology in Language Teaching," the purpose or goal of the engagement in a discussion may be to seek or express opinions, to persuade someone about something, or to clarify information. Besides, speaking can be used to give instructions, describe things, to complain about people behavior, to make polite requests, or to entertain people with jokes or anecdotes. Jones (2007) said that in speaking we tend to be getting something done, exploring ideas, working out some aspects of the world, or simply being together. To get a better speaking practice, it is better to do the practice with a partner, in order to know about the response of our partner's feeling regarding to our speaking. Harmer (2001) stated that most speaking involves interaction with one or more participants, in which an effective speaking involves a good deal of listening, and an understanding of how the other participants are feeling. So, it can be said that speaking involves the speaker and the listener. Harmer (1991) also as cited in Widiati&Cahyono (2006) added that when two people communicate, each of them normally has something that they need to know from the other. In other words, speaking can be more effective or significant when we try to interact with someone else. For this idea, Richards and Renandya (2002) stated that speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions.

### **FISHBOWL STRATEGY**

#### **The Understanding of Fishbowl Strategy**

The "fishbowl" is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the "fishbowl" circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to the process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when the teacher wants to make sure all students participate in the discussion, when the teacher wants to help students reflect on what a "good discussion" looks like, and when the teacher needs a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics. In fishbowl, the teacher has the role to control, such as when a student speaks more than one minute, the teacher will limit the time or stop that student and invite the next student to speak.

Fishbowl strategy can create productive environments for initiating important, yet potentially charged, conversations, and we can imagine a number of topics that would work well within the fishbowl format (Garrison and Munday, 2012).

#### **Procedure of Fishbowl Strategy**

In implementing the strategy, Brozo (2007) used some steps as follow:

1. Identify a focus for class discussion. Typically, the more controversial and charged the

issue, the greater level of engagement on the part of students.

2. Ask students to turn to a neighbor and talk about their ideas and opinions related to the issue. Tell students to take notes on their discussion.
3. Demonstrate the format and expectations of fishbowl discussion.
4. Get the discussion started by telling the discussants sitting in a cluster to talk among themselves about the ideas and opinions they raised when conversing with a partner.
5. Tell the other students to listen carefully to their classmates while they engage in a small group discussion and take notes or jot down questions share afterward.
6. Allow the discussants to talk for 5 minutes or so, getting involved only if the discussion dies or to ensure everyone is contributing and taking turns.
7. When the small group finishes or is stopped, ask the other students to make comments on the discussion they observed and/or ask questions of the discussants. This is an ideal time to model appropriate comments and questions.
8. Gather small group of volunteer discussants, and continue to the fishbowl process until all students have had the opportunity to be inside the fishbowl and they are clear about their roles and expectations.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer used the CAR (Classroom Action Research). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), action research is a kind of self-reflective enquiry which is undertaken by participants in any situations which is aimed to improve rationality and educational practices after those practices are carried out. Self-reflective consists of plan, act & observe, reflect, revise plan, act, observe, and reflect. The research was held at SMAN 12 Medan which was located in Pattimura Street. The research took place on class XI IPA where they consisted of 30 students. In implementing the strategy, the writer taught the class using Fishbowl strategy during five meetings in one cycle including the test. In the first cycle the result had not meet the indicator of success yet, so the research continued to the second cycle. At the second cycle, the result had met the indicator of success, so the research stopped at the second cycle.

## RESULT

A test was used as the instrument to measure the progress of students in the classroom. This classroom Action Research was done in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of five meetings including the test. During the implementation of the Fishbowl strategy, the writer provided the students with some topics related to speaking skills.

### First Cycle

The first cycle was conducted for five meetings. In this first cycle, the teacher provided the topics for students' prior to go into the classroom so that students could find out any references about the topic. In every meeting, the writer provided different topics in order to keep the situation running well, and the students would never feel bored. Students were very curious to speak about the topic, and they were very active. There were four different topics; *Smoking Should Be Banned*, *Drugs Should Be Illegal*, and *Females Are Better Students than Male*, and *Sex Education should be Taught at High Schools*. At the end of the cycle, the writer conducted speaking test in order to assess their speaking ability and to see the progress of their speaking. At this test, the writer used descriptive text and the students had to describe the picture. The students worked in group, but they presented the result individually. To assess students'

speaking ability, the writer collaborated with the teacher in the classroom. The writer and classroom teacher assessed students' speaking ability, and then the results from both assessors were calculated to get the final result. From the result, it means that the writer was failed to implement the Fishbowl strategy to improve students' speaking ability. From that reason, the writer planned the second cycle, where the writer made an evaluation before going to the second cycle. Based on the fact above, the writer concluded that the treatment at this cycle was not successful. The result of the students was not achieving the indicator of success.

### **Second Cycle**

The writer conducted this cycle for three meetings. At this cycle, the writer and the teacher collaborated to design the material and held the class in order to get better improvement from students. The topics used at this cycle were *National Examination should be held in our country*, and *Love*. For these topics, students were very enthusiastic in the classroom.

After the writer and the teacher evaluated the second cycle by giving the test at the end of this cycle, the result showed that students got good improvement in their fluency, comprehension, and also vocabulary and the language control. As the result, they had already achieved the indicator of success where 90 % of them must get the score among 82 – 100 and proved that Fishbowl strategy was successful and useful for the students in improving their speaking ability.

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FISHBOWL STRATEGY IMPROVES STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY**

Fishbowl strategy had improved students' speaking ability by providing the chance for each student to speak up in the classroom. In this research, students' speaking ability has improved by using fishbowl strategy and solved the problem found at the preliminary study especially the main problem that is students were lack of chance to practice their English. It was because fishbowl provides students the opportunity to deliver the idea, and each student got the chance to speak in the classroom during the lesson. The improvement of students is described as follow:

### **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is one of the very important aspects in speaking. It holds the big role in speaking. At the first cycle, some students were lack of vocabulary. Some of them used the vocabulary, but the vocabulary they used were only the repetitions. They still also used some vocabularies inappropriately even they used Bahasa to say it, and it resulted at the end of the first cycle where 23 students got the score less than expected. For example when they wanted to say the word "look for", they preferred to use "mencari", and when they wanted to say "concern", they preferred to use "memperhatikan", or they mostly said "It is bored" rather than "It is boring". However, at the second cycle, students showed the great progress. They were very active and they used rich variety of vocabulary. The topics given at the second cycle made them explore the topics without inhibition. At the end of second cycle, all students (100%) had the accurate and rich use of vocabulary. They now could say "I am so exited" rather than "I am so exiting".

### **Fluency**

In fishbowl, every student was given the chance to speak up. However, most of them delivered their opinion less than one minutes. This situation resulted at the end of the first cycle where 23 students got the score

between less. When students spoke, they were slow with frequent pauses, where they had something to tell about, but they did not know how to put it forward. They had something to say, but they did not know how to say it in English. Therefore, it means that the writer was still failed to improve students' speaking fluency. However, at the second cycle, they had the daily life topics, where in fishbowl they had enough time to practice and practice. They spend two minutes well to deliver their opinion about the topic. Then, at the end of the cycle, the writer did the test, and it proved that students' fluency improved better here, where 30 students (100%) got the score between 82 – 100.

### **Pronunciation**

In terms of pronunciation, students had a significant improvement. At the first cycle, 24 students used the chance but with inappropriate use of vocabulary, and they had the difficulties, since the elements in PALS related each other. The way they pronounced also different and it influenced also the elements in PALS such as pronunciation. For example, when they said:” I sit with my friend and smoke”, they pronounce the word “sit” like the word “site” or “cite”, and it really influence the discussion since the listeners had to guess the real meaning of the sentences produced. Then, at the second cycle, the students spent two minutes of their turn to speak up in the classroom well. In every meeting, they practiced their English and the writer and the classroom teacher kept correcting their pronunciation during the discussion. At the end of the cycle, the writer conducted the test and the result shows that 100% of students were successful to get the score 82 – 100.

In the fishbowl discussion, every student had their turn for two minutes maximum to deliver their opinion about the discussion materials. In first cycle, the writer provided the topics about alcohol for students to discuss using fishbowl strategy. The result of the first cycle shows that most of the students were not able to participate actively in the discussion using fishbowl strategy. When the students got their turn, they did not use their time well.

Then in the second cycle, the writer chose “Love” as the topic. In the fishbowl discussion, most of them were eager to speak up and deliver the opinion because they were so excited about the topic. Therefore, when the writer used fishbowl as the strategy to provide the chance for students to explore and deliver their opinion about the topics well in two minutes. The result of the second cycle shows that all students had achieved the indicator of success. From the explanation, it proves that fishbowl strategy is very effective in improving students' speaking ability because it provides the chance for students to practice more and more.

### **CONCLUSION**

Students learn language in order to be able to communicate. Speaking is a dialogue process, which must be practiced to communicate orally. Speaking also is the process of building and sharing the meaning through the uses of verbal and non-verbal symbol in various contexts (Channey, 1998). Through speaking, the exchange of information can be carried out. However, it still became the problem for students at class XI IPA of SMAN 12 Medan, so the writer applied the Fishbowl strategy in order to improve students' speaking ability. The

implementation of Fishbowl strategy in teaching speaking worked successfully because this strategy gave all students the same opportunity to speak in which not only some students who could speak in the classroom. That is why every student could practice their speaking ability.

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