

## TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE AT THE ACCOUNTING STUDY PROGRAM

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### **Abstract**

This paper was the result of classroom action research that tried to answer the question how small group discussion technique could improve the students speaking skill and what factors influenced it. Frankly speaking, some English lecturers are only able to blame their students because of their limited skill in speaking English. In the other words, the lecturers rarely discuss about the technique used in the teaching process, especially speaking class. Though, lecturer also becomes a factor that determines whether or not the students can develop their speaking skills well. This researcher took second semester students of Accounting of Pasir P engarain University as his participant. This research was done in two cycles that each cycle consisted of 5 meetings with the test included. In the cycle 1, it was found that the students speaking skill got progress in two aspects only such as Vocabulary and grammar, while the other aspects are not well improved yet. That's why the researcher did the cycle 2 as to improve the three aspects could not get better yet. After doing the second cycle, it was found that the students' pronunciation, fluency and comprehension got progress. It could be seen from the speaking score achieved from the test given. The rule of friends found in small group discussion technique became the main factor that influences students' speaking skill. Pertaining to the data analysis of the comparison of based score with the two cycles. It could be concluded that Small group discussion better improved the students' speaking skill at second semester students of Accounting of Pasir Pengarain University.

*Key words: Speaking skill, small group discussion*

### **A. Introduction**

Speaking is one of the four language skills, which is also taught besides Listening, reading and writing in Accounting study program of Pasir Pengarain University. It is taught from the first up to the third year with the different course description and credit hours for each semester. Every student in University of Pasir Pengarain is expected to have good English communication skill when he completes his study. In order to have good English communication skill, every student needs to

practice their English both in and outside their classroom. By seriously practicing such activities, their English will get better and improved.

Based on the writer's teaching experience in the first semester, most of the students did not master the parts of speaking skill well yet. It can be identified during the learning process and giving speaking test in both mid semester and final semester test. From 24 students in the class, the results of test shows that only 2 students got Excellent (8.3%), 4 students got good (16.6%), and the others got poor (75%)

Above of all, it is not the time to blame the students only in relation with the condition above. The technique used by the lecturer also becomes a factor that determines whether or not the students can develop their speaking skill. Orlich et.al (1985) proposes that:

“Small group discussion could improve the student's speaking skill. There are 3 reasons why we can use small group-discussion in improving speaking skill. First discussion is used to increase teacher-student interaction and student-student verbal interaction in the classroom. Second, discussion is used to promote meaningful personal interaction and learning. The learning may be of contents, skills, attitudes or processes. Third, it is used to help students adopt more responsible and independent mode of learning.”

Dobson (1981: 62- 63) explains that discussion techniques for use in small- group discussion are outlined as follows:

1. Divide the class into small- group of three to six students each. Give each group a different discussion topic that will necessitate outlining of several important points. Have one student in each group to write down these points as they emerge from discussion by group members.
2. Allow the groups to discuss their respective topic for at least 10 minutes. When group member have finished their discussion, they should elect a spokesman who will report on the group collective thoughts to entire class.
3. Call on the spokesman of one of the groups. After he gives a short presentation (five minutes or so), class members should question him or anyone else in the group in view point expressed. You can help general discussion along by addressing your own questions to members of the group.

Follow the some procedure with the remaining groups until all groups have given their presentation.

Finally, the writer uses the small group discussion to improve Students' speaking skill at second semester students of the Accounting study program of Pasir Pengaraian University.

## **B. Methodology of the research.**

First, this research is a classroom action research. The action research in the language classroom is a tool used by teachers to improve their way of teaching. Participants of this research were the second semester students of the Accounting study program of Pasir Pengaraian University. There were Twenty Four students observed and researched.

Second, the Instrument was the tool to collect data of the research. The researcher used two kinds of instruments; the first was observation checklist/ field note, recording, test and interview in every step of cycles. All deals with the teaching and learning activity Action research is cyclical process that each cycle comprises several stages. Kemmis and Robin (1988: 12) and Arikunto, et al (2007:20) develop a model known as the action research spiral. Every cycle has four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

Third, after getting the data, there are two steps done by the researcher in order to analyze the data, they are:

1. Quantitative data

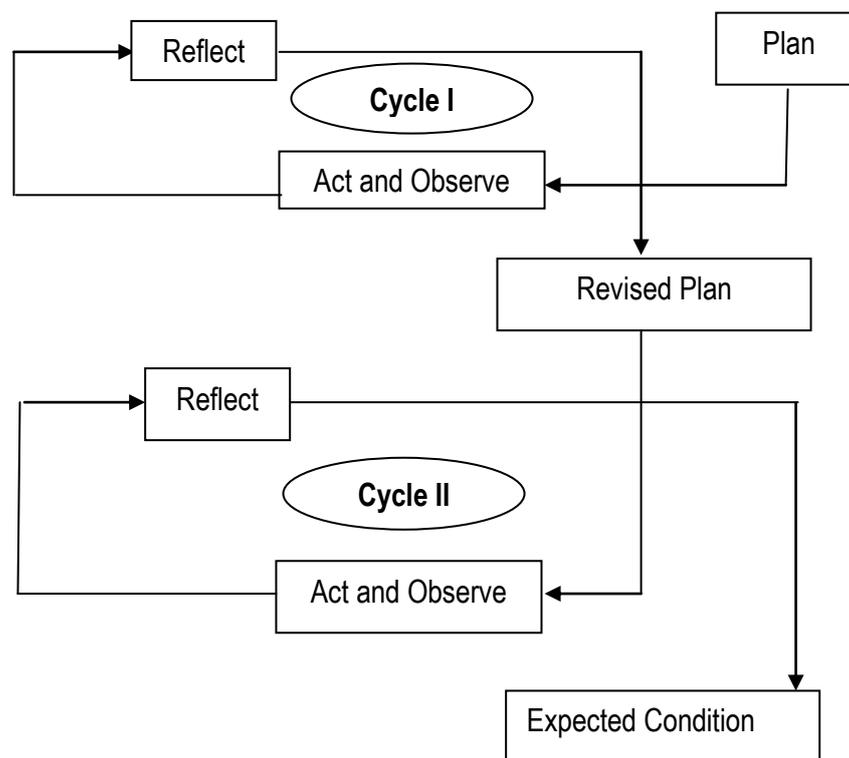
After assessing the test given through oral presentation by using the proficiency description of testing oral ability, the data will be analyzed quantitatively.

2. Qualitative Data

The data gathered from the observation checklist, field notes and test during the research will be done through oral presentation, will be presented in qualitative description. As suggested by Gay and Airasian ( 2000: 239-253) that there are some steps can be done such as data managing, reading/memoing, classifying, and interpreting.

The last, the procedure of the research can be seen as follows:

**Figure 1: The procedure of classroom action research**



Based on the model above, the researcher did this research in two cycles' processes. Each cycle consists of four meetings with a test included on it. Every meeting will be about (2 X 50 minutes).

### **C. Finding and Discussion**

In order to ease the writer analyzing the improvement of students' speaking skill through small-group discussion technique, it was shown the average score from the test given at the beginning as the based score, test at the end of cycle one and test at the end of cycle two.

#### **1. Based score of speaking test without applying small-group discussion technique.**

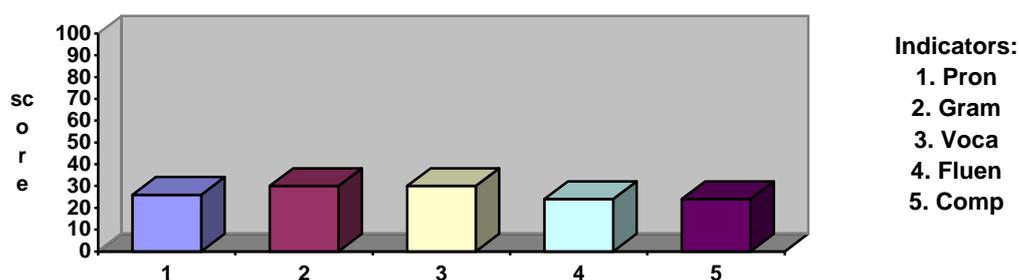
The based score was found by the researcher before he applied small group discussion in teaching speaking. The result of the test could be seen on the table one and be more detail in the chart follows:

**Table 1:**

**Class average score of students' based score in speaking indicators**

No	Indicators	Score	Score conversion
1	Pronunciation	1.3	26
2	Grammar	1.5	30
3	Vocabulary	1.5	30
4	Fluency	1.2	24
5	Comprehension	1.2	24

The result could be seen on the following chart:



From the average score above, the researcher found the class average of each indicator; Pronunciation was 26, Grammar was 30, Vocabulary was 30, Fluency was 24 and comprehension was 24. As we saw the based score average above and analyzed to the following interval, it could be concluded the students' speaking ability was still fair or almost poor. The interval is:

No	Interval score	Level
1	80 – 100	Very good
2	61 – 80	Good
3	41 - 60	Average
4	21 - 40	Fair
5	0 - 20	Poor

In relation to the interpretation had by the researcher then consulted to the collaborator, it was decided to do the improvement of students' speaking skill by applying small group discussion technique.

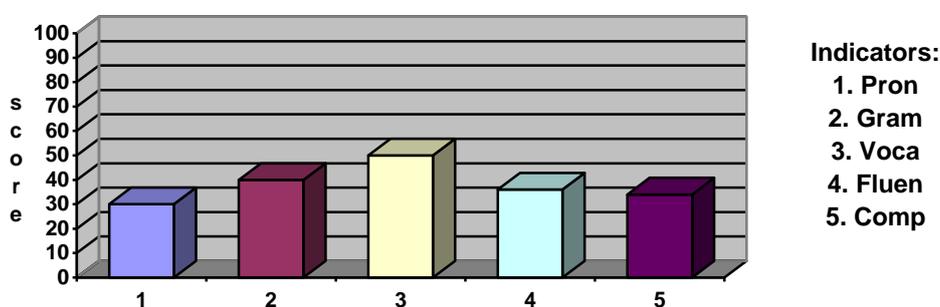
**2. Score of speaking test in cycle 1 by applying small-group discussion technique.**

In the cycle 1, the writer had applied small group-group discussion technique when he taught English speaking. The result of test done at the end of cycle 1 (one) could be seen from the table 2.

**Table 2:**  
**Class average score of students' score in speaking indicators in cycle 1**

No	Indicators	Score	Score conversion
1	Pronunciation	1.5	30
2	Grammar	2	40
3	Vocabulary	2.5	50
4	Fluency	1.8	36
5	Comprehension	1.7	34

It was also shown on the following chart:



From the average score of test in cycle 1 above, the researcher found the class average of each indicator; Pronunciation was 30, Grammar was 40, Vocabulary was 50, Fluency was 36 and comprehension was 34. As we saw the based score average above and analyzed to the following interval, it could be concluded the students' speaking ability was in fair level to average level. From the observation checklist completed by the collaborator, it was observed that in cycle 1 some students were difficult to practice speaking especially on the aspects of pronunciation, fluency and comprehension. While, the aspects of grammar and vocabulary were better, because some students were still asking about the aspects frequently to their friends and also their lecturers.

**3. Score of speaking test in cycle 2 by applying small-group discussion technique.**

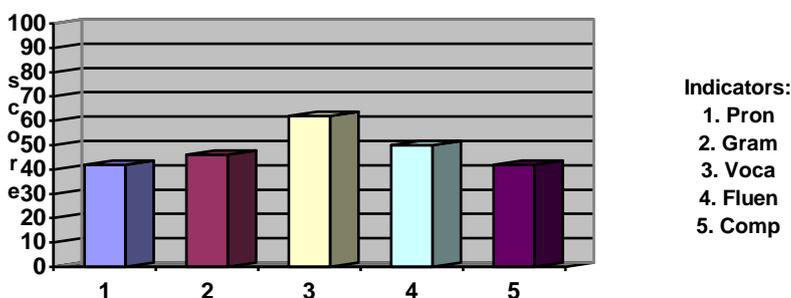
After gaining the result of test in cycle 1, the writer believed that the more the technique applied in teaching speaking and the better the score would be. That's why the writer comes to cycle 2. The result of test done at the end of cycle 2 could be seen from the table 3.

**Table 3:**

**Class average score of students' score in speaking indicators in cycle 2**

No	Indicators	Score	Score conversion
1	Pronunciation	2.1	42
2	Grammar	2.3	46
3	Vocabulary	3.1	62
4	Fluency	2.5	50
5	Comprehension	2.1	42

On the chart, it will be shown as follows:



From the average score of test in cycle 2 above, the researcher found the class average of each indicator; Pronunciation was 42, Grammar was 46, Vocabulary was 42, Fluency was 50 and comprehension was 46. As we saw the based score average above and analyzed to the following interval, it could be concluded the students' speaking ability was in average level to good level. The achievement gained was better than in cycle. One of the factors is that the students were more active to discuss and most of them prepare the material of speaking before the class begun like some articles or journal that could be retrieved from internet.

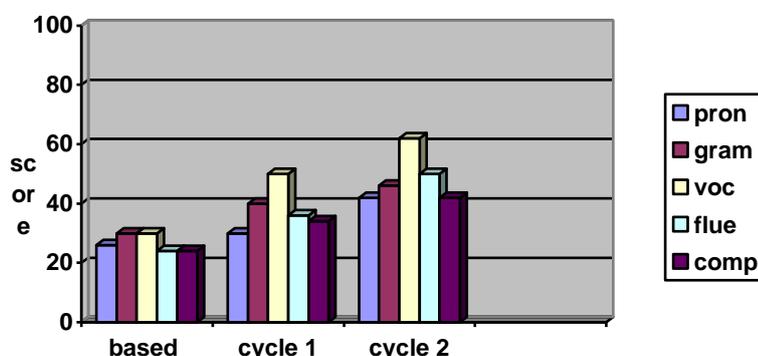
**4. The improvement students speaking skill by applying small-group discussion technique started from the based score, cycle 1 and cycle 2.**

The improvement of students' speaking skill by applying small-group discussion could be seen from the table 4.

**Table 4:**  
**The improvement students speaking skill by applying small-group discussion**

No	Indicator of speaking skill	The average of based score	The average score of cycle 1	The average score of cycle 2
1	Pronunciation	26	30	42
2	Grammar	30	40	46
3	Vocabulary	30	50	62
4	Fluency	24	36	50
5	Comprehension	24	34	42

The data of students' improvement in speaking English above could be easily internalized by analyzing the following chart.



The analysis would be given is that all the indicators or aspects of speaking got improvement all the cycles. First, the pronunciation aspects, it could be better improved from average score 26 then it was 30 in cycle 2 and got increase in cycle 2. It also happened to the other aspects like grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

### 5. Factors influence students' speaking skill

Furthermore, after getting the quantitative and qualitative data, the writer also interviewed the students by recording the response given on the question given. The question related to the factors influence students' speaking ability. Various answers were responded by the students. In general, the answers are that their English could be improved because of their friends, the technique used by the lecturer and the media that supported the process of learning speaking in the class.

## D. Conclusion

Finally, It could be concluded that Small group discussion better improved the students' speaking skill. The rule of friends found in small group discussion technique became the main factor that influences students' speaking skill. It means applying small group discussion gave students more chance to be involved in the class speaking.

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