Improving Student's Speaking Fluency Through Small Group Discussion Strategy

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
	Abstract: This study discusses how the implementation of small group discussion (SGD) improved the student's speaking fluency in intermediate class at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Maliki Malang. This was done based on the learning problems found in the preliminary study that the student's speaking fluency was 3.5 in communication and 3.53 in explanation. They were not active in speaking fluency either communication or explanation. Furthermore, they did not totally involve in the learning process. This study used classroom action research of Kemmis and Mc Taggart Model with the procedures: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting the action. The findings show that in cycle I, they got 3.70 in communication and 3.78 in explanation. Finally in cycle 2, their communication in fluency was 4.16 and 4.08 in explanation. This was done by revising the materials to support the discussion. This means that SGD can improve their speaking fluency. **Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang bagaimana implementasi strategi diskusi kelompok kecil meningkatkan kemampuan kelancaran berbicara siswa kelas intermediate di *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Maliki Malang. Penelitian ini dilakukan karena ditemukannya masalah pembelajaran pada pra penelitian, yakni kelancaran berbicara mereka masih 3.5 di dalam komunikasi dan 3.53 dalam menjelaskan. Mereka belum aktif dalam komunikasi dan menjelaskan sesuatu. Selain itu, mereka belum semuanya berpartisipasi selama proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitan tindakan kelas menggunakan model teori Kemmis dan Mc Taggart dengan tahapan : perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi dan refleksi. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa di siklus 1, kelancara berbicara mereka menjadi 3.70 di dalam komunikasi dan 3.78 dalam presentasi. Di siklus 2, kelancaran mereka meningkat menjadi 4.16 dalam komunikasi dan 4.08 dalam mejelaskan sesuatu. Hal demikian dilakukakan dengan memperbaiki materi untuk mendukung jalannya diskusi. Ini menunjukkan bahwa diskusi kelompok kecil bisa meningkatkan kelancaran berbicara mereka.

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English language is very important in constructing an international communication. As an international language in which people must learn it, it is required for the stuents of English and Non-English education to learn it. For English students, their purpose of learning is to know the structures, such as grammar, vocabulary, and so on. While for Non-English students, they learn speacific words or terms in English. They are called English for Specific Purpose (ESP) students. In ESP, teaching covers four skills of English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Speaking and listening are conceptually correlated. Meanwhile, reading and writing are correlated in written communication (Sadiku, 2015). In this casse, a person's speaking competence can be done through reading experience, thus he can create spoken or written forms (Fauziyah, 2011).

In oral competence, speaking plays important role in communication. It must be learned due to the basic skill in communication (Oradee, 2013). Beside those three language skills (listening, reading, and writing), speaking is used to deliver information to others orally. It is a media in sharing ideas through word arragement produced by the sounds (Darmuki et al, 2018). For having this goal, oral practices have to be regularly done (Antoni, 2014). The students must be instructed to practice speaking in the classroom. It is because allowing them more opportunity to practice makes them accustomed and capable in oral competence. In relation to this, Ismail (2014) said that teaching speaking is not only about speaking practices but giving them much time duration to talk. This purpose is to make involved in the interaction with their classmate in the class. Furthermore, a strategy in teaching speaking should be innovatively implemented. Thus, they do not merely practice

speaking, but also learn speaking base the instuction from the teachers. It is because a learnig instruction makes them motivated (Manurung, 2015). The teacher must implement an appropriate instruction to get the certain goal of the learning (Hou, 2015). For non native speakers, for example Indonesian, talking in English is hard to be mastered. This is experienced by the students of Medical Department attending "*English Program*". This is as their prerequisite program at the State Islamic University of Malang (UIN Malang) in which they stay at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Malang. As non native speakers, it is difficult for them to speak fluently.

In preliminary study, it is found that there were 3 students of 13 students who have a good speaking ability. However, they have stayed for one year and more and learned English. Yet, their speaking ability, especially in fluency aspect, is still poor. They were shy to speak and talk in English. Furhtermore, they are not involved in the learning activities. It is caused by the activities in the classroom in which the teacher merely implemented the strategy *ceramah*, thus they might be bored. However, speaking activity is an interaction between speaker and interlocutor (Bustari et al, 2017). This means that learning speaking is done through an interactive interaction and communication. It is required for the teachers to praise their students to practice speaking and build a good relationship with their students. Thus, they have an enthusiasm and spirit to speak in the class (Leong dkk., 2017).

The researcher conducted a speaking test. It was noted that he has used many learning strategies in the classroom. However, the students were not active and interactive. Then, based on the score of speaking test, their mean score was still below the target The target score of intermediate class at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* was 70 and it was not achieved by them. Thus, their speaking fluency problem must be seriously solved.

There are many ways or strategies in improving their problems, especially in fluency. Those are reciprocal teching method, story telling, roleplay, communicative games, and group discussion. Reciprocal Teaching Method is a solution for the students to be participative and active in the discussion, but this usually improves their reading skill through predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying. Then, storytelling merely facilitates one way communication. This solely makes them deliver information either verbal or non-verbal language (Mokhtar et al, 2011). This strategy is are not appropriate in improving their fluency in speaking. Furhtermore, role play makes them speak up and make them confidentt (binti Abdul Rahman dkk., 2018). However, this does not intensively improve their speaking fluency. Then, the strategy of communicative game can also make them active in speaking, but they cannot totally construct their own speaking fluency. It is solely related to modelling, repetition, and student's group work (Toro dkk., 2018). Therefore, the strategy would be proposed in this study is Small Group Discussion strategy. This gives them opportunity to discuss each other. They are able to construct their own opinion and ideas to the topic content. This is done by turn, thus they participate in the process of learning and are motivated (Felicity, 2018).

Many studies of Small Group Discussion strategy were conducted. Argawati (2014) said that the ability of studen's speaking can be improved through small group discussion strategy. They have opportunityy to practice speaking. They do not solely use the words from the text in, but they can create their own words in the oral practices (Argawati & Surakarta, 2014). In relation to this, Ismail (2014) conducted a research on improving his students in speaking ability. In the implementaion process, he made the strategy based on his student's competence in English. Therefore, he used pictures as the media and then asked them to discuss the materials. Then, one of them in each group were asked to present the result of the discussion and allowed the other students to clarify and ask questions. In short, he found that their weaknesses in speaking can be increased through SGD strategy. Furthermore, Darmuki et.al (2018) conducted a cooperative learning research. They found that the implementation of cooperative learning can improve the student's speaking skill. They can easily and frankly each other and vice versa without hesitation. They are highly motivated because they can freely discuss with others and they did not find anxiety of speaking.

Here, what makes this research different from the above research is the level of education and type of class. In this research, the students are attending the lecture at university who should have a good speaking skill. They are not English education students. Moreover, the class is made as the required program for the Medical Department students staying at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Malang. This is how make this reaserch attempt to contribute the development of knowledge, especially in English education. In this case, a small group discussion strategy facilitates the students to think out some problems gathered with verbal interaction (Argawati & Surakarta, 2014). From this point of view, it can be known that the students have much time to speak with their friends in the class. In implementation, it is focused on the classroom action research of implementing a small group discussion strategy in semester IV. Along this time, the students need a more creative learning method. However, it is because the teaching is centred to teacher's explanation and the students do not develop their language production, especially in speaking skill. Thus, this research attempts to relate a text discussion to speaking comprehension. It is how small group discussion improves speaking fluency of the students after they are reading.

METHOD

This research is a kind of Classroom Action Research in which the teachers and students collaborate in a collective enquiry in improving the educational practices rationality (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988). Frankle (2003) said that CAR is one of the ways to solve the problems found either in individual or group. This research is design for the purpose of improving the problems experienced by the students in the class. This underlying idea of this research approach is to

implement small group discussion strategy in improving speaking fluency. It will be conducted in two cycles in which each cycle contains three meetings. Each meeting contains one material or topic. Furthermore, before implementing the action, a preliminary study is done to check the student's learning problem. After identifying the problem and also the student's learning need, the researcher makes the plan for the purpose to overcome it. He implements in some stages or steps of small group discussion strategy. In conducting this research, the researcher is assisted by one collaborator who accompanies him in designing and implementing the plan and determining the success criteria. The researcher acts as the teacher, the collaborator helps him to observe the learning process.

This study was conducted at Medical Department *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang (UIN Malang). This research was focused on English Morning Class of medical students in semester IV. The class is started from Monday to Thursday. The subjects of the study were 13 students. They are forth semester students of intermediate class of the academic year of 2018/2019. Furthermore, the reason why the researcher conduct this reseach in UIN Malang is UIN Malang is called as a Bilingual University. It can be seen when the students should attend the lecture of Arabic and English after they get the regular lecture. He found that the students in English course are still low in comprehending speaking practice. Moreover, they look hesitate to express their ideas orally.

In conducting the research, it is important to know the whole needs of the class. Hence, the researcher adapts Kammis and Taggart's model. It covers preliminary study, planning, implementing, observing and reflecting action (Kammis & Taggart, 1988:11). Before implementing the strategy, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to identify the student's learning problems. Then, he decides the plan and its observation. Finally, he comes to the reflection whether in one cycle is successful or not. Those are the steps in conducting the research at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Maliki Malang.

RESULT
Cycle One (I)

In cycle one (I), there was not a significant improvement got by the students. It can be seen in the preliminary study, their speaking fluency was still low. Only 3 students (23.1%) achieved the minimum passing grade (70) set in *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah*. While in cycle one (I), the analysis result showed that the student's speaking performance did not achieve the target score (70). There were 8 out of 13 students (61.6%) who passed the target score of speaking test. This means that there were 5 students (38.5%) who did not achieve the score target. The result of their speaking score can be seen in figure 1.
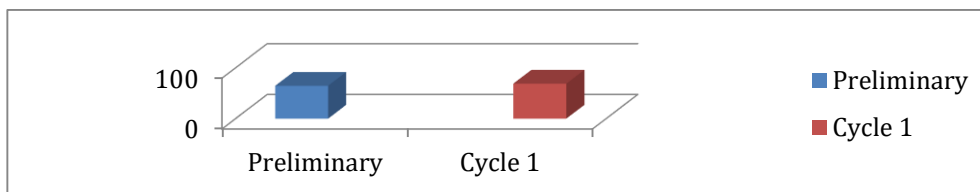

Figure 1. The Student's Speaking Improvement in Preliminary Study and Cycle I

While the speaking component achieved by the students in cycle one (I) can be seen below:

Table 1. The Speaking Components Achieved by the Students in Cycle I

No	Aspect	Task	Preliminary	Cycle I
		Communication	3.5	3.70
1	Fluency	Explanation	3.53	3.78

The result of student's fluency, the student's communication and explanation were obtained. In their communication, there were not students who performed "very poor and poor" ability. There were only 5 (38.5%) performed "fair" (get the ideas briefly) ability, 7 (53.8%) performed "good" (effective communication) ability, and 1 (7.7%) performed "very good" ability. While in explanation, there were 4 (30.8%) performed "fair" ability, 8 (61.5%) performed "good" ability, 1 (7.7%) performed "very good" ability.

Based on the student's score achievement above, it is noted that their speaking fluency did not significantly improve. It is because some students did not achieve the speaking fluency well. This does not reach the target score which is set 70. Thus, the researcher and collaborator plan to continue the implementation of SGD strategy in the second cycle.

Table. 2 The Number and Score of the Students in Cycle 1

No	Aspects	Communication					Explanation				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		VP	P	F	G	VG	VP	P	F	G	VG
		F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Fluency	-	-	5	7	1	-	-	4	8	1
		-	-	38.5	53.8	7.7	-	-	30.8	61.5	7.7

While the list of the student's oral performance in each aspect with its indicators can be seen as follows.

Table 3. The Student's Achievement in each aspect in cycle I

No	Cycle	Fluency	
		Effective	Long Turn
1	Preliminary	-	-
2	Cycle 1	✓	✓

Cycle Two (II)

In the second cycle, the implementation of SGD strategy can significantly improve the student's speaking fluency. There was a significant improvement got by the students. The result of their speaking score can be seen in figure 1.
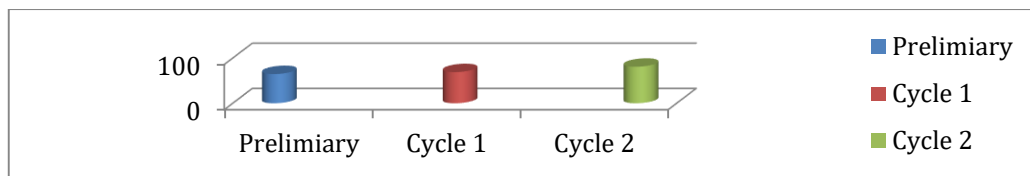

Figure 2. The Achievement of Student's Speaking in Cycle 2

While the speaking component achieved by the students in cycle one (II) can be seen below:

Table 4. The Improvement of Speaking Components Achieved in Cycle II

No	Aspect	Task	Preliminary	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Fluency	Communication	3.5	3.70	4.16
		Explanation	3.53	3.78	4.08

The result of student's fluency, the student's communication and explanation were obtained. In their communication and explanation, there were not students who performed "very poor and poor" ability. There were only 3 (23.1%) performed "fair" (get the ideas briefly) ability, 5 (38.5%) performed "good" (effective communication) ability, and 5 (38.5%) performed "very good" ability. While in explanation, there were 3 (23.1%) performed "fair" ability, 6 (46.2%) performed "good" ability, 4 (30.7%) performed "very good" ability. Based on the student's score achievement above, it is noted that their speaking fluency significantly improve. Thus, their speaking score target which is set 70 was achieved. It means that the implementation of Small Group Discussion whic is modified in cycle succesfully improve their speaking score. While the list of indicators in each aspect can be seen as follows.

Table 5. The Number and Score of the Students in Cycle 2

No	Aspects	Speaking Performance									
		Communication					Explanation				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
		VP	P	F	G	VG	VP	P	F	G	VG
		F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Fluency	-	-	3	5	5	-	-	3	6	4
		-	-	23.1	38.5	38.5	-	-	23.1	46.2	30.7

Table 6. The Student's Achievement in Each Aspect in Cycle II

No	Cycle	Fluency	
		Effective	Long turn
1	Preliminary	-	-
2	Cycle 1	✓	✓
3	Cycle 2	✓	✓

DISCUSSION
Student's Speaking Fluency

In the preliminary study, the students of intermediate class were low in speaking Performance. Most of their score were under 70, the score target set at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Maliki Malang. After implementing small group discussion, the student's speaking score were improved.While the process explanation can be seen as follows.

In cycle I, the student's fluency got improved. Indeed, their score does not achieve the target score set before, but at least there was an improvement rathen than their score in the preliminary study. In this cyle, their fluency either effective communication and long turn was achieved well. Again, the lack of media and related games became the students not totally active during the learning. Eventhough they got the effective and long turn communication, but their mean Thus, in the next cycle, the teacher only focused on improving the student's vocabulary mastery as a part of accuracy aspect in speaking skill.

In cycle two (II), the student's fluency got improved than cycle I. This means that most of the students got 70 and more. Their speaking ability either in communication or explanation was achieved. Their speaking fluency surprisingly improved from cycle I to cycle II. It is because the teacher used brainstorming before beginning the lesson,such as giving some pictures and instructed them to guess what the materials will be. Moreover, he gave some games to enrich their vocabularies, such chain words, guessing words, and so on. Therefore, this shows that the use of small group discussion strategy can improve the student's speaking fluency.

By using SGD strategy, they can increase their speaking ability and can construct their own learning. Cohen (1994) said that it is an activity in which the students learn together and involve in doing their task given by the teachers. They are motivated in the learning process because they felt enjoyful interested in the teaching strategy impelemented in the classroom. It is because the teacher researcher also inserted some games before beginning the discussion, such guessing pictures, word chain, and so on. In line with this, Baksh (2016) stated that game is seen as a good way to explain vocabulary and make the students esier to understand and remember its meanings (Bakhsh, 2016). Furthermore, a good team work was established while the process of learning, especially in the whilst activity. They cooperated each other in discussing a topic given by the teacher. This actually gave them more oppotunity to exchange their opinion without feeling shy because they interact with their classmates. In the process of communication and explanation, they can learn each other, take and give the idea, correct the mistakes, and construct their social skill because of the regular interaction.

The above improvement was got through implementing some steps in the learning, these are (1) showing the students some pictures that are related to the topic will be discussed then; (2) let them describe by explaining what they looked at glance; (3) dividing them into 3—4 groups containing 3—4 persons and distributing the text or topic will be discussed; (4) they discussed each other in the group; (5) ask the spokesman from each group perform the result of discussion while the others are taking notes and arguing his presentation; (6) giving feedback to all group about what they have discussed; (7) giving reward for the best group and speaker. This instruction was done to have a speaking competence, especially in fluency aspect. It is because a learning instruction support them achieve the learning goal communicative competence (Mede dkk., 2017).

In relation to the implementation of small group discussion research, Ismail (2014) utilized this strategy to improve student's speaking ability in SMAN Surabaya. The improvement made them able to speak fluently. They were instructed to describe some pictures and discuss in groups. In the same year, Argawati (2014) used small group discussion (SGD) method to overcome the student's problems of speaking skill. By intensively giving them opportunities to talk, the improvement of their speking was surprisingly achieved, especially in vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, Darmuki et.al (2017) used a cooperative learning strategy to increase the student's speaking skill. By designing the class to learn and do the task together, especiall in constructing the communication among the students, they got successful research result in which the use of cooperative learning can decrease their hesitation and shyness of speaking. It is because they can freely talk and automatically start speaking without feeling inconvinience. Overall, Thotakura and Anuradha (2018) said that small group discussion can help the students construct communication skillls and make them active in learning (Thotakura, t.t.).

In comparing this research to the above research findings, this was focused on improving the student's speaking ability by training them to regularly speak in the forms of dialog and monolog. In dialog, the students discussed the topic with their friends in a group. While in monolog, they explain or present the result of discussion to the other groups. In addition, this research is different with those above researchs in the setting of the class in which it focused on English for medical department, especially the medical tretment in islam. It is because the students are expected to not only master the medical science, but also the its correlation to islamic knowledge.

In line with SGD strategy implementation in English learning activities, there were many related research conducted. Setyawan (2015) conducted a classroom discussion to know whether this method can improve the student's speaking skill of SMPN 3 Depok. In the result of analysis, he found that his student's speaking skill get improved from poor to good category because of the interactive activities in the class (Setyawan, 2015). In doing so, Fauzi (2017) used small group discussion in vocational high school students. In implementation, he utilized SGD till 3 cycles. As the result, he found that SGD can improve his student's speaking competences because of regular oral practices and innovation in each cycle, such as doing an interview, giving simple direction, and other (Fauzi, 2017). In the next year, Christie (2018) conducted a reseacrh about the strategies used in improving student's speaking skill and build their self confidence. She mentioned in her findings that small group discussion (SGD) is one of appropriate strategies used help them in interaction and conversation. The teacher can give a correction in terms of pronounciation, grammar, vocabulary, and so on (Listyani & Kristie, 2018). In line with this, Wahyuni and Jumaina (2019) compared SGD and think pair strategy. They came to the conclusion that both are efficiently used in enhancing the speaking ability (Wahyuni, 2019).

From the research on Small Group Discussion above, it is proved that SGD successfully enhance the student's speaking ability. Hence, by implementing some steps of small group discussion strategy, it is noted the student's speaking abilty was really increased. This also increases their learning involvement and confidence in oral skill and social interaction. This shows that the impelementation of SGD can improve their speaking ability and involvement in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings and discussion presents that the use of small gruop discussion strategy (SGD) can improve the student's speaking ability at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah*. This is taken from their speaking achievement, involvement, and their attitudes toward the use of Small Group Discussion strategy.

The use of small group discussion strategy in improving the student's speaking ability was succesfully achieved. To get a good result, the teacher used a teaching strategy gathered with communication skill trained by him in each meeting. He emphisized the ability of communication either in the form of dialogue or monologue. The students speak and discuss in turn. Then, they present the discussion in each group to share what they have discussed and probably the others give them some feedback. Furthermore, the researcher utilized some games inserted in the teaching process in order to give an enjoyful learning in the classroom. Finally, they achieved a good result through speaking score achievement, observation checklist, field notes, and questionnaires.

In the context of product of the research, the result of student's speaking score show that they experienced a good learning process till they get a better speaking quality. Even though in the preliminary study, most of their speaking score were under 70 with average 64.6. However, after implementing SGD strategy, their speaking score result was surprisingly achieved. Most of them got 70 and more with average 80.77. This shows that their speaking achievement was more than the score target at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* whic is set 70.

Over all, the use of smalll group discussion strategy has made the students enjoyful in learning, motivated, communicative, and more capable in speaking mastery. It is because the process of the implementation of small group discussion strategy allow them have more opportunity to speak, interact, train their speaking skill regularly. Besides, the games were also given to make the classroom more enjoyful and fun.

Based on the conclusion above, some suggestions are made for English teachers and future researchers. First, SGD strategy is a good way for improving the student's speaking ability and also as the solution for overcoming many problems of English classroom such as student's boredom, inactiveness, and so on. It is because the implementation of SGD gave them more opportunity of develop their speaking ability and encourage them to be more motivated as well. Second, the future researchers are also suggested to to implement SGD strategy in different levels of speaking and classroom. It is also hoped that they can develop the use SGD in different ways of teaching and appropriate research. Then, SGD can be used in different subjects to overcome the problems of learning. Finally, it is suggested that English teachers and researchers can develop more and innovate a new way of teaching through SGD based on the student's learning problems and need.

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