

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM FOR STUDENT SPEAKING IMPROVEMENT

Fikri Yanda

State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya
fikri_yanda@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT: *This qualitative study explores the role of English Students Club as an extracurricular program to improve the English speaking skill of the students of the English Education Department in the Faculty of Tarbiyah (Islamic Education) State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The informants were 21 students of the English Education Department who were joining the club as its members. They were to fill out the questionnaires made by the writer. In further, an interview was conducted for finding more details on the club. The findings suggest three areas of concerns: 1) the students of English Department are suggested to join English Students Club as an alternative to improve their English speaking skill; 2) the programs in the club were related to speaking improvement; 3) Suggestions made by the writer in order to improve the organization management.*

Key words: *English Students Club, speaking improvement*

Introduction

English has become a very important language in the world. It is used formally or informally by the people all around the world. Some countries will consider it as its native language; some others will take it as the second or the foreign language. As stated by Bloomfield in Hanunah (2009: 3), English is used widely all over the world. Almost in all fields of occupations and professions, English takes a very important

role as one of the requirements for applying a job. Therefore, to learn English is a must for the people whose native language is not English, if they want to develop their carriers in this global era.

In Indonesia, English is not a strange language. Moreover, the government has made it as one of the important foreign languages to learn, except the national language: Bahasa Indonesia. Although the curriculum for teaching English stated that it can be taught at least at grade for of the elementary school, English is even taught from kindergarten. The English teaching and learning can be found until the university level (Hanunah, 2009: 5).

However, the result of the studies in relation with the achievement of the English learning and teaching shows that it still need more development. It can be seen from the people who can speak or write well in English are still far from satisfaction (Cahyono and Widiati, 2011: 36). The question is “how could the process of teaching and learning for about twelve years (from kindergarten until high school) show that unsatisfactory result?” There should be problems or inconsistencies in implementing the curriculum in the process of learning and teaching.

In response to the failure of the educational process by the government through educational institutions: elementary, junior, and high schools, the students in the university level who were the output of those schools were looking for an alternative for them to improve their English ability, especially in speaking. They, then, created a community containing themselves as students, aiming at achieving the goal they didn't get in their previous schools.

The names for the community could be varied. For examples, the names are English Club, English Community, English Debate Community, etc. Nevertheless, the goal is all the same: English speaking improvement. In the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya, there were several particular students communities. The students in Adab Faculty (Faculty of Letters) conducted an informal

students' community called "English Community". They organized the community independently from the faculty intervention. Usually, they had the meetings after the lectures had done.

Another student's community in purpose of speaking improvement was found in the Faculty of Tarbiyah (Islamic Education). Differently with one in Adab Faculty, this community was under the faculty management as the student organization. That was the Student Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan/HMJ) of English Teaching Department (Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris). There was also another student organization called as the Student Association of Foreign Language Development (Lembaga Pengembangan Bahasa Asing/LPBA). Both organizations had similarities in foreign language ability development.

Almost all of the members of the organizations were the students of English Education Department. In a preliminary observation, they were interested in joining in such organizations because of its purpose in foreign language development, especially English. Since they were studying English as their major of study, they needed to add extra knowledge and experiences from outside of the classroom sessions. The subject of the study was the English club managed by *Lembaga Pengembangan Bahasa Asing* (Student Association for Foreign Language Development).

At the beginning, the club aimed at facilitating the English Education Department students in IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya to have a place for practicing and improving their English speaking skill outside of the classroom sessions. This organization was established and organized by the students of the department. Based on the preliminary observation, the club's weekly activities (the club established weekly meeting during lecturing active days: Monday to Friday) were such as discussions in particular topics which are factual, conversations, and debate.

The Nature of Speaking

Speaking is about how to produce the oral text that has meaning and been understood by the speaker – hearer. Nunan (1995: 2) states that speaking is interactive processing information. It means that without speaking, we cannot give the information to others. Fulcher (1997: 24) also states that speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learning because the effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction involved not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic element of speech, the learners, therefore, feel that speaking is a difficult skill of language learning.

In further, Nunan (1995: 3) states that “at the process of producing oral text, there are several elements which build up the construction of speech such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy”. The uses of each component above are various depending on the context, environment and background in which the person gets involved in a communication.

Learning foreign language will not have any meaning without learning to speak the language. Allen (1965: 35) states that “since many languages do not have written form and we learn to speak before we learn to write or read, then language is primarily what is spoken and secondary what is written.” So, learners have to learn to speak the target first then learn to write or read in the following stages in order to have good communication well.

Speaking means someone’s ability to express himself in daily life by using word orally. It is also an ability to express systematized idea in accordance with the content fluently in real communication. While the elements of language such as pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure and vocabulary of target language at a normal speed as those of native speakers are needed in the real communication (Hanunah, 2009: 15).

Speaking ability is an important thing in the process of language learning. As stated by Hanunah (2009: 15), the ability is important because by mastering it, we also master the language. Therefore, it is non sense that someone is expert in a language but he/she can't speak the language as well.

Speaking ability, according to Fulcher (1997: 67) is defined as the ability to express oneself in live situation in précis word or the ability to converse to express sequence of ideas fluency. He also states that oral production or speaking ability is an ability to use essential pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure, and vocabulary of the foreign language at a normal rate of delivery for native speaker of the language.

Littlewood (1984: 54) added that oral ability is the act and expression of speaking ability. The following are several definitions of oral skill: 1) the ability to understand short passage of English; 2) the ability to answer questions that require short or extended answer; 3) the ability to ask questions to elicit short or extended answer; 4) the ability to use orally a fair number of elementary sentence patterns; 5) the ability to reproduce orally the substance of a short passage of English after having heard it several times and read it.

Talking about speaking, there are several aspects to be considered. According Fachrurrazy (2011: 82), speaking has four aspects to be considered: 1) ideas; 2) fluency; 3) diction (choice of words); and 4) accuracy (pronunciation, stress, intonation, and grammar).

Pronunciation

Nunan (1995: 5) states “one key to success in learning to speak a foreign language is having good pronunciation.” It is not all necessary for the students to sound like native speakers (though some may have that goal). It is important, however, to be comprehensible. In order to help learners improve their pronunciation, it is important to understand information about how the sounds of English are produced.

In addition, Fulcher (1997: 25) defines pronunciation as the way in which a word is pronounced. The goal of pronunciation practice is not merely to make the learners memorize to talk about the voice of consonant vowels, intonation, stress, and rhythm but to enable them to produce those tongues in their utterances.

Particular problems occur in much pronunciation when the learners have great difficulty hearing pronunciation features which we want them to reproduce. Frequently speakers of different first language have problems with different sounds. So the important testing of pronunciation for listening to the learners who consistently make a pronunciation error is not easy.

Communicative Competence

Speaking ability is related to the communicative competence as the basic competence. The communicative competence makes one could communicate with others. Brown (2000: 246) states four different components or subcategories of the communicative competence. The first two subcategories reflect the linguistic system; the last two define the functional aspects of communication. They are:

1. Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence is the aspect of communicative competence that encompasses knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.

2. Discourse competence

According to Brown, discourse competence is the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances.

3. Sociolinguistic competence

This is considered as another sub-competence of communicative competence. It contains the knowledge of socio-cultural rules of language and of discourse.

4. Strategic competence.

This includes the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. This competence produces actions to compensate for breakdowns in communication.

Methodology

The method of the study was qualitative. This study aimed at finding out whether the English Students Club could be a solution or an alternative to improve the speaking skill for the students of the English Education Department, the qualitative study fit the purpose of this study.

Creswell (2003: 74) gives a limitation for a qualitative study as, “In a qualitative project, the author will describe a study problem that can best be understood by exploring a concept or phenomenon. The qualitative study is exploratory and writers use it to explore a topic when the variables and theory base are unknown. As Morse (1999) states quoted by Creswell (2003: 74):

The characteristics of a qualitative study problem are: 1) the concept is “immature” due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous study; 2) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; 3) a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; 4) the nature of the phenomenon may not be suited to quantitative measures.”

The use of qualitative methods in study is almost always discussed in theoretical terms (Davies, 2007: 135). There are particular reasons for this:

1. Although qualitative study –broadly defined- has a long history, much of the intellectual argument for its expanded use emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and was linked to perceived weaknesses in quantitative study. Particular aspects targeted were the partial view of the complex social reality that survey study was seen to be delivering and the extent to which this limited perspective was largely driven by the writer’s own perception of the field being investigated. Concern was felt that the interviewee’s subjective

perspective was not adequately accommodated by quantitative methods.

2. Qualitative study uses its gathered data to create theoretical ideas, compared with experimental study that starts with a theoretical position and accumulates data in order to test its validity. The two methods have quite different study objectives.
3. The roots of qualitative study as we know it can related to some complex areas of philosophical, psychological and sociological discourse revolving around questions such as:
 - How do we know what we know? How do we know what other people feel?
 - Is what people say different from what people do?
 - How can writers interpret their findings without bringing into play their own gender, age or life experiences? Feminist writers in particular had a sense that masculine perspectives tended to be predominant in sociological empiricism and theorizing and that this demonstrated the lack of the objectivity in traditional study methods.
 - If we categorize people, say as black, young or disabled, and then use categories to compare them with other people, do the comparisons have a legitimate meaning? In particular, is the meaning that writers impose upon them the same as the subjects of the study would recognize for themselves?

Data Collection

The technique for collecting data in this study mainly used survey with questionnaire as the instrument. The survey is best used for the study as this study is trying find out the description of the subject of the study. The survey with questionnaire could take data as many as needed for a descriptive qualitative study as stated by Nazir (2005 : 54).

The use of the questionnaire in this study aims to find out the description of the students of English Education Departments as the

subject of the study who join the English Students Club as well. Also, it is to find out the views of them on the club they have joined for certain times.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains 11 questions. The questions are mainly to find out the description of the English Students Club and whether it could be an alternative to improve English speaking skill in the views of the members.

The first 1-5 questions are to find out the description of the members. The last 5-11 questions are to conduct the views of the members about the club. The main question of the questionnaire is “Do you think by joining the community your English speaking skill will improve?” This is to find out the members’ belief on the English Students Club ability in improving their English speaking skill.

There were 21 respondents responded to the questionnaire. They are the members of the club and also the students of the English Education Department.

Interview

To support the data from the questionnaire, the writer also conducted an interview as another instrument. As stated by Arikunto (2006 : 166), the interview aimed at checking the data from the questionnaire and describing the data that was not answered yet by the questionnaire.

The interview used in this study can be recognized as an unguided interview. Arikunto (2006: 156) said that the unguided interview is an interview without a list of questions or a guide to ask. In this type of interview, the writer was free to ask any kinds of questions. However, it was still in the scope and the limitation of the study. Also, it was to ask any questions which are not answered yet by the questionnaire.

The interview was conducted to find out the description of the Club more in detail. The details were the programs of the club in order to

improve speaking skill. The problems faced by the organizers in establishing the club was discussed as well as in the interview.

Discussion

This study tried to find out whether the English Students Club contributed to the speaking improvement of the students of the English Education Department. Using descriptive qualitative design, the data were collected using questionnaire. The overall findings suggested the students to join the English Students Club in order to improve their speaking skill.

The findings that are taken from the questionnaire result will be described below:

1) The Description of the Members

Based on the questionnaire, almost all of the members of the English Students Club have been joining the community about two semesters or more. Twelve members (57%) have been joining the community for two semesters. Eight members (38%) have been joining it for more than two semesters. Only one member (5%) have joined it just for one semester.

In general, the members of the community knew the community from their friends (12 members or 57%) while six members (29%) got the information of the community from the pamphlets or brochures. The rest, three members (14%) got the information from other sources.

In response to the question “How often do you follow the community meetings?” there were twelve members (57%) ticked the option of “sometimes” to join the agendas of the community. Eight members (38%) answered “often” to join it. Only one member (5%) ticked “always” in joining all agendas of the community.

Meanwhile, the background of the members who had joined other communities with a similar purpose: speaking improvement before joining the club were 13 members (65). The rest eight members (35%) had not joined such a community before.

The findings also showed 12 members (57%) joined other activities outside of the club in purpose to improve speaking skill. It was only nine members (43%) didn't join any other activities but only in the club.

2) The Members' View on the Club

In answering the question about the improvement they had got so far from the club, ten members (47%) doubted that by joining the community will be able to improve their speaking skill. Moreover, two of them (10%) didn't believe it at all. However, nine members (43%) still believed that the club could help them improving their speaking skill.

In addition, 15 members (71%) stated that the club contributed just a little on their speaking improvement. Four members (19%) believed that the improvement they had got so far was because of joining the English Students Club. However, the rest two members (10%) didn't put it having any contribution on their improvement.

Thereafter, the members described any improvements they had got so far from the club. The most important improvement wished from the members was getting better to speak in English (eight members/38%). Some of them felt not able to make friendship when they joined the club (four members/19%). Some believed that they gained more knowledge and speaking practice (five members/24%). But, still, there were the others who felt nothing after joining the club (nine members/42%).

From all activities or programs the club had, the members mostly like: discussion/debate (12 members/57%), the club orientation (eight members/38%), only one member (5%) liked none from those activities.

In choosing between learning speaking inside of the classroom and the club, eight members (38%) preferred learning inside of the classroom. The reason was that there were more materials and explanation. The classroom learning and teaching process was more supportive and effective. The teaching and learning methods were better

and more creative. The structure was better than in the club. Since it was under the control and the monitor of the teacher, it was manageable.

In the other hand, six members (28%) preferred to develop speaking skill inside of the club because the situation was more free, fun and fresh, while the classroom learning and teaching process was so serious and monotone. Meanwhile, the rest five members (24%) chose both learning in the classroom and the club.

The Description of the English Students Club

English Students Club was a student activity organized by the Student Association for Foreign Language Development (LPBA). Almost all of its members was the students of English Education Department. The main purpose of the club was to improve the foreign language skill of the members, included English. The activities were such as organization orientation, weekly discussion or debate, and international seminar.

1. Club Orientation

It is an annual event for introducing the club and its activities preview to the new members of the club. It is the most favorite program to the members. In the program, the new members were taught basic speaking. The advantage of the program was also building emotional relationship between the members.

2. Discussion

The discussion was established once a week. The system of the discussion was almost like a seminar or presentation. Each member has his/her own role, such as a moderator, a speaker, a check person who would check and correct the grammatical errors and errors in pronunciation and spelling.

The description:

- 1) Moderator

In this position, one should control all sessions of discussion and the opinions delivered, from the beginning until the end. The moderator is to open the discussion and gives an introductory description of the topic discussed. It is to build the audiences' understanding into the topic.

2) Presenter

Presenter is the one to deliver and present the topic in details and more overall. The topics were decided by the members. Sometimes, the organizers would take any experts on the topic, or even an English native speaker to be the presenter.

3) Error Checker

This person has a job to check and monitor all errors in grammar or pronunciation done by the members. Sometimes, the role was taken by the moderator. Dictionaries and other material books became the references in correction.

4) Audience

Other members of the club who took no position in the discussion would take place as the audience. They would respond the presentation by questions, comments, arguments, or suggestions.

3. Debate

Another activity was debate. This activity is closed to discussion. Instead, the format is different. In debate, there were arguments and rebuttals. The members would be divided into two big groups. One group is to support the called as the affirmative. The other is to oppose it as negative group.

4. International Seminar

This annual event is held once a year, usually in the middle of the semester. It is called as an international seminar because the presenters or the speakers of the seminar were usually English native

speakers. The presentation and discussion were also delivered in English.

Conclusion

To answer the challenge of the global era people need to improve their communication skill, especially in the languages used widely by the people all around the world. One of the languages is English. Moreover, English has positioned itself as the most important international language to be mastered compared other languages.

Particularly, the people of the countries which its language is not English, such as Indonesia, no matter what, should do more efforts in order to master it. As it is in the field of academic, business and professionals where the communication skill is really important, one would be difficult to go further without it.

Answering the challenge, the students of English Department of IAIN Sunan Ampel took the opportunity to provide a place for them to increase their ability in communication. They created the English Students Club in order to improve their speaking skill. The findings of the study shows that the interesting and creative programs made in the club, also supported by the situation and motivation to learn, the club can be the place for them to achieve the goal: speaking improvement.

References

- Allen, Harold B. 1965. *Teaching English as a Second Language*. USA: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company.
- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 2006. *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2000. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Pearson Education.

- Cahyono, B.Y. & Widiati, U. 2011. *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia*. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Creswell, John W. 2003. *Study Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. California: Sage Publications.
- Davies, M. B. 2007. *Doing a Successful Study Project: Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fachrurrazy. 2011. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Teachers in Indonesia*. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Fulcher, Glenn. 1997. *Testing Second Language Speaking*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hanunah. 2009. *The Problems Faced by the Second Semester Students' of English Department at Tarbiyah Faculty IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya in Learning Speaking*. A thesis at Faculty of Tarbiyah IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.
- Littlewood, William T. 1984. *Foreign and Second Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nazir, Moh. 2005. *Metode Penelitian*. Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Nunan, David. 1995. *Language Teaching Methodology*. Prentice Hall Europe.
- Ur, Penny. *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.