

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH PEER TUTORING IN SMP MUHAMMADIYAH BOARDING SCHOOL TARAKAN

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### ABSTRACT

*This research is aimed at discovering the improvement of students' speaking skill by implementing the method of peer tutoring. The research was conducted at the first grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tarakan, totaling 22 students. The researcher used Classroom Action Research with two cycles to observe the improvement of students' speaking skill. The two cycles included planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research used descriptive qualitative method. Then, the data collection methods were observation, questionnaires, and tests. The result of this research showed that the students' speaking skill were improved through the implementation of peer tutoring method. Students' speaking score was increased from the pre-test, cycle 1, to cycle 2. It increased 7.0 points from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Besides, the students became more active and confidence than before. This research result confirmed that peer tutoring method could improve the students' speaking skill at the first grade of SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tarakan.*

**Keywords:** *Peer tutoring, speaking*

### INTRODUCTION

Mastering English in this era is a need to support human activities. Nowadays, people use English in many activities such as education, business, etc. People could communicate by using English with other people around the world. Therefore, many countries put English as one of the subjects in their schools, including schools in Indonesia.

There are four skills in learning English. Those are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This research focuses on speaking skill. Many students have difficulties in speaking English. It also happens to the students in SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tarakan. The problems of cognitive and mental prevent students to speak English. They cannot speak English because they do not know English vocabularies, shy, afraid, and others. Therefore, the researcher took this study to improve students' speaking skill.

Speaking is a verbal communication. It is an important skill in human interaction. Speaking helps people to deliver their ideas to other people. Harmer (2007:284) defined speaking as the ability to speak fluently, presupposes knowledge of language features, and ability to process information. Besides, Al Hosni (2014) also stated that speaking is the active use of language to express someone's idea or meaning.

In learning activity, speaking has some types. It might be based on the function. Brown (2018) concluded four categories of speaking performance assessment. Those types are Imitative, Intensive, Responsive, Interactive, and Extensive.

There are some rubrics of speaking that are used to measure students speaking skill. Hughes (2020) proposed a scale to score speaking. It includes accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

This research used peer tutoring to help students in speaking activity. Peer tutoring is a kind of collaborative learning. Peer tutoring requires students to have team work in a group. Hott and Walker (2012) stated that peer tutoring is a strategy that involves students to role as academic tutors and tutees.

Hott and walker also stated some functions of peer tutoring as follows: Peer tutoring may help students to increase their respond in smaller groups. It also helps students to increase their academic and social developments.

According to Hott and walker (2012) there are five most frequently used peer tutoring models. Those are class wide peer tutoring (CWPT), Cross-age peer tutoring, Peer assisted learning strategies, and reciprocal peer tutoring

## METHOD

The researcher used Classroom Action Research in implementing her research. The researcher applied peer tutoring in four steps based on CAR steps. Those steps are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The steps were implemented into two cycles. Additionally, the research was conducted in SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Tarakan. The research was conducted from January to May 2022. The subject of this research was students of class 7B SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tarakan. There were 22 students in class 7B. Next, the researcher analyzed the data by using these steps. The data was analyzed as qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data was taken from observation and questionnaire. The result of observation was written and related to the speaking score. The result of questionnaire also categorized and connected to students' speaking score. The quantitative data was analyzed by using average score from students' speaking test.

## FINDINGS

### A. The Condition before Implementing The Research

Before doing the research, the researcher applied observation, questionnaire, and pre-test to diagnose students' ability. The result of questionnaire is displayed in the table 1 below.

Table 1. The questionnaire result

No	Questions	Yes	No
1	<i>Apakah kamu menyukai kegiatan speaking?</i>	20	2
2	<i>Apakah kamu ingin berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan lancar?</i>	22	0
3	<i>Apakah saat ini kamu bisa berbicara Bahasa Inggris?</i>		

	<i>Yes:10</i> <i>Enough:7</i> <i>No: 5</i>
4	<i>Apa kendalamu dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Kosakata (9)</i></li> <li>- <i>Tata bahasa (9)</i></li> <li>- <i>Merangkai kalimat (15)</i></li> <li>- <i>Pengucapan (9)</i></li> <li>- <i>Malu (11)</i></li> <li>- <i>Takut salah (12)</i></li> <li>- <i>Lain-lain: gugup, lupa pengucapan, salah penempatan kata, takut terbelit, ragu, gengsi.</i></li> </ul>

Table 1 showed that not all students like speaking. There were two students disliked speaking activity. However, all students wanted to speak English fluently. The students' desire to speak English is a good start to improve their speaking ability. Then, in the question no 3, there were 10 students responded that they could speak English, 7 students said that they were good enough in speaking English, and 5 students answered that they could not speak English. Their obstacles in speaking English were vocabulary (9), grammar (9), making sentence (15), pronunciation (9), shy (11), afraid (12), and others.

Table 2. Students' score

No	Name	Rubrics of Scoring				Score
		Vocabulary (35)	Pronunciation (25)	Fluency (20)	Grammar (10)	
1	ANK	14	16	7	5	42
2	AR	23	21	10	5	59
3	AZZ	24	19	5	4	52
4	AHL	20	11	6	5	42
5	AA	14	5	5	4	28
6	APRK	24	12	7	5	48
7	CAA	14	6	6	2	28
8	FGH	20	20	8	5	53
9	HAI	28	16	14	7	65
10	IK	20	16	12	5	53
11	KMJ	14	12	7	5	38
12	KQR	20	10	6	4	40
13	NH	26	10	8	7	51
14	NA	28	20	16	7	71
15	NS	28	18	17	7	70
16	NFR	28	11	16	6	61

17	NQK	26	10	6	5	47
18	SP	14	6	7	4	31
19	SR	25	10	8	5	48
20	SNF	23	15	8	5	51
21	SAN	20	18	8	4	50
22	YUH	28	20	15	7	70
<b>Average</b>		21.9	13.7	9.2	5.1	49.9

Table 2 showed that the students got low score before the implementation of the research. The mean total was 49.9. It was a low speaking score for the activity of describing things around them. Moreover, table 2 also indicated that students' vocabulary score was low because they did not produce many vocabularies to describe the things around them.

Moreover, based on the observation, the students got problem when they were asked to describe a thing. They did not know how to describe and speak. Many students only spoke less than 5 sentences. Besides, they also had low voice and were doubtful with their description. Although they got time to prepare what they wanted to describe, they were shy. They also had many discursions in fluency.

### B. The Condition after Implementing the Research

The discussion of condition after implementing the research consists of three parts. Those are the improvement of the students' speaking skill, the condition of classroom, and students' responses when they were speaking by using peer tutoring method. Generally, students showed their improvement either in students' speaking skill or in the atmosphere of the classroom. The discussion is explained below.

#### *The Improvement of Students' Speaking Skill*

The condition of students' speaking skill before action research and after action research are provided in the form of Table 3 and the following elaboration.

Table 3. The comparison scores of before and after the action research

Research Findings	Before Action Research	After Action Research
a. Achievement	Mean of pre-test: 49.9 / 100	Mean of cycle 1 : 65.5 / 100 Mean of cycle 2 : 72.5 / 100
b. Vocabulary	Many students had lack vocabulary and could not explain about their things (13.7 / 35)	Most of students produced more many vocabularies and better in describing things around them C1 : 23.6 / 35 C2 : 27.9 / 35

c. Pronunciation	Students did many mispronunciations  (13.7 / 25)	Students' pronunciation was better  C1 : 19.8 / 25  C2 : 20.4 / 25
d. Fluency	Many students could not speak English fluently  (9.18 / 20)	Many students improved their fluency  C1 : 16.2 / 20  C2 : 17.5 / 20
e. Grammar	There were many ungrammatical sentences  5.13 / 10	Students' grammar was better  C1 : 5.5 / 10  C2 : 6.6 / 10

Table 3 presents the differences of students' speaking skills before and after implementing peer tutoring. Generally, students' speaking skill improved. The average of vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and total increased. Particularly, pre-test, cycle 1, and cycle 2 were applied by analyzing the previous problems. Besides, those steps were applied in order to find students' problems and repair their speaking skill.

After knowing students' problems from observation and pre-test, the researcher made some important material that could be learned and taught by the tutors to their friends. One of the researcher's points in tutors meeting was mastering vocabulary about things around us. The researcher gave more explanation to tutors in different time. The tutors helped the researcher to discussed with their friends what things they could explore to describe the things. In the cycle 1, some students could describe things with more many structured sentences. Then, it improved in the cycle 2 where they had more examples from their friends than those in cycle 1. The researcher described the improvement of each part in the elaboration below.

Vocabulary is the main part that students can improve by peer tutoring method. The vocabulary mastery influences the content and meaning of students' speaking. In the pre-test students did not produce many vocabularies. Moreover, they did not know what parts they had to describe. In the pre-test, students could describe their things mostly about 3 or 4 sentences. Particularly, they were already given some examples and materials how to describe things. However, exploring and finding appropriate sentences to describe the things were still difficult for them. Then, the students' speaking skills improved in cycle 1 and cycle 2 when they had more opportunities to learn and practice their speaking with the tutors and friends. Additionally, they had more many vocabularies in their description.

Pronunciation also gets improvement. It increased from pre-test to cycle 1 and cycle 2. In the pre-test, the students had many mispronunciations because they spoke without considering the correct ways of pronouncing the words. However, in cycle 1, they had friends to learn together and discuss how to pronounce some words with their friends in group. Then, the pronunciation got better in cycle 2 because it had been discussed in cycle 1 with their friends and the researcher also

checked and fixed students' mispronunciation. Thus, when conducting the speaking test in the cycle 2, students' score of pronunciation was better than in cycle 1.

The students also had high fluency improvement from pre-test to cycle 1. In pre-test, students got difficulty to speak fluently because they were also confused with things that they had to describe. It obstructed students to speak fluently. Besides, they spoke hesitantly because they were shy, afraid, and doubt to speak. It was found from the observation and questionnaire results. On the contrary, after practicing speaking with their friends in cycle 1 and cycle 2, they were more confident and became more fluently to describe things.

Next, the students also had improvement in the grammar part. The improvement of grammar was not too high because conducting two cycles was not enough to enable students master the grammar related to the given topics. However, they still experienced improvement in making sentence and using appropriate grammar. Their common mistakes were noun phrase and singular-plural. Those common mistakes then could be fixed in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

### *The Class Situation when Peer Tutoring was Implemented*

On the cycle one, the activity focused on mastering the vocabularies, the ways to describe, and the bravery to speak. The implemented actions in cycle one were identifying vocabulary and learning to describe a thing. Those activities were applied in their groups with their tutors and friends. In this cycle, students were more active to learn in groups. However, the researcher also found some problems in the cycle one. The first problem was students still used many incorrect grammars. Some students also had low voice and were not too attractive to speak with their friends. Besides, there were two students who moved to the other groups. The last problem was the tutors were not patient to treat their friends.

In the cycle 2, the researcher concerned on fixing the common mistakes in cycle 1 to improve students' condition. The researcher trained the tutors about the common mistakes. Those were the content of describing things and also the group management. The students mostly had errors in the use of singular-plural and noun phrase. Thus, these materials were stressed to the students in order to master the materials. The tutors accompanied their friends to learn the materials and speak together. The situation in this cycle was more lively. The students were enthusiastic, active, and gave support to each other. They became braver to speak.

Briefly, there were some problems which happened in this cycle. For example, a few students had low voice and mispronounced the words they used. However, this was not a critical condition and the students had tried their best which then showed their improvement.

Table 4 presents the condition of class and students before and after implementing the research.

Table 4. The comparison of class condition before and after the action research

Research findings	Before action research	After action research
a. Confidence	Low confidence	High Confidence
b. Involvement	Passive in discussion, just few students join in speaking activity	Active in discussion, more many students could speak.

c. Atmosphere	Passive, the students just had little speaking.	Active, the students helped one each other, they were respect to others
d. Participant in speaking class	Low, the students were busy with their own business	High, many students involved better in speaking by paying attention, giving some questions, or joining the discussion.
e. Speaking practice	The students had less chances to practice their speaking	The students had more chance to practice their speaking in their group and class discussion.

After doing this research, the class situation had some improvements. Those improvements were shown at students' confidence, atmosphere, participation in speaking class, and speaking practice. Those items were analyzed by researcher and observer. The improvement supported the data that students' speaking skill improved.

The students experienced high confidence, motivation, and involvement in joining this research. Before doing the research, the students were shy and afraid to speak English. They were doubt to produce sentences. It was identified by their low voice and low speed. They were confused what they had to say. Meanwhile, when the researcher applied peer tutoring, students could improve their confidence, motivation, and involvement in speaking activity. They became more confident because they had friends to be their partners in practicing speaking. Thus, their speaking was better after the implementation of peer tutoring.

The atmosphere of class also became more active after implementing peer tutoring. At the beginning, the class was quite. Only the students on duty who were speaking, while the others were busy with their own speaking and other activities. On the contrary, when peer tutoring was implemented, all students practiced speaking together and paid attention to their friends who had turn to describe things in front of the classroom.

Next, peer tutoring also helps students to be more involved in speaking. Before implementing peer tutoring, students were not interested to be better in speaking. They just spoke what they could without making any effort to get better in speaking. However, in cycle 1 and cycle 2, the students were involved in speaking enthusiastically because they had peer tutors. Additionally, that condition enabled them to learn together, mainly focusing on how to speak and describe a thing.

Besides, by using peer tutoring method, the students' participation in speaking class activities increased. At the beginning, many students did not involve in speaking activity. They ignored and just spoke on they turn, but many students started to participate actively when peer tutoring was implemented. It was because the tutor and other friends gave support frequently to speak in turn. They helped each other to join in speaking.

The practice of speaking also improved by implementing peer tutoring. They did not only speak what they could when they learned speaking independently, but they also had more time to practice speaking when they were in group with their tutors. Their friends in group were practicing and helping each other, so the other group also did the same.

Overall, those are the explanation of class situation when peer tutoring was implemented. The situation of class and students were better when they had opportunity to speak in group. They practiced, learned, and helped each other in their groups and class.

### *Students' Responses in Speaking by Using Peer Tutoring*

Beside the situation of classroom which has been stated above, the researcher also asked students' opinion about speaking activity by using questionnaire. There were three given questions. Those included their opinion of doing speaking activity, their feeling, and their improvement after the implementation of peer tutoring.

For the first questions, all students (22 students) agreed that peer tutoring helped them in speaking. It was also found from their score improvement. By using peer tutoring, the total score average increased, the condition of class was more lively and happier, and the students were more enthusiastic.

Then, the students had some responses when they learned speaking by using peer tutoring. They felt happy, excited, and also felt tired sometimes. These feelings were related to their activities in group. They did some activities together. Thus, they felt better when they practiced speaking with their friends than when they practiced speaking by themselves.

The sentences below are students' responses about speaking in group with the method of peer tutoring.

- (a) *So happy, lebih PD, lebih semangat, dan aktif dalam berbicara*
- (b) *Tambah lebih lancar dan tidak ada malu malu lagi dan lebih meningkat kosakatanya dan saya sangat senang*
- (c) *Seru belajar bahasa inggris sudah ada yang bantu bersenang-senang*
- (d) *Kadang capek, kadang senang juga*

Those are some examples of students' feelings. Students felt happy when speaking by using peer tutoring because they did not only speak English, but they also felt their improvement and learned together with friends. Nevertheless, one student wrote that he felt tired about the activities, mainly when learning together with his friends, since the speaking activities of peer tutoring were carried out in 2 cycles.

Moreover, they were also conscious about their improvement. Most of students said that they were more confident and happy because they could speak English better than before. These are some examples of students' thought about their improvement.

- (e) *sudah memahami jika seseorang berbicara bahasa inggris bisa speaking Inggris dengan lancar, banyak mengetahui kosakata bahasa inggris*
- (f) *Lebih tau bahasa. Inggris, lebih berani, tidak gugup lagi, bisa lebih baik bahasa Inggris, ana bangga bisa belajar bahasa Inggris dan diajari oleh ustadzah*
- (g) *Lebih mudah dimengerti dan lebih menyenangkan*
- (h) *Bisa berbahasa Inggris, senang karena ada mentoring bisa belajar berbahasa Inggris bersama*
- (i) *mulai bisa mendeskripsikan benda dengan kalimat yang panjang dan bisa mandiri membuat kalimat untuk dibuat menjadi teks*



The students got benefit from learning speaking by using the method of peer tutoring. They understood more when they practiced speaking with their friends in group. They also thought that they were not nervous. Their skill in describing things also got better with more complex sentences. Most of students felt happy when recognizing their improvement in speaking.

## CONCLUSION

After doing the research, it can be concluded that the use of peer tutoring could improve students' speaking skill. The improvement of students' speaking skill includes students' vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar. Besides, peer tutoring also could make the situation of classroom to be more active. The students were active to practice speaking with their friends in their groups and classroom. They had partners to practice speaking. Moreover, they also discussed and learned about the things around them. Finally, the students also had some responses in doing speaking activity by peer tutoring method. They were happy, excited, more confidence, and the other good reactions when they were speaking in their groups with their friends and tutors. Then, since the activities were repeated for some times, one student also stated that she was tired. However, all students answered that they were happy in doing speaking activity by using peer tutoring method. They could improve their speaking better than before.

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