Promoting Active Learning Activities To Improve Students' Speaking Ability

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Abstract

This research aimed to know the application of Active Learning Activities in Students' Speaking Ability. The result of this research can be as a reference to the students in improving their speaking ability and help lecturer to become creative in teaching and make the students engaged in learning English. This research used pre-experimental method. The population of the research was the second semester students of English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Bosowa Makassar in 2017/2018 academic year which consisted of one class. In conducting the research, the researcher used total sampling technique because there is only one class of the second semester students. The data collection was done by using speaking test (pre-test and posttest). The results of the research and discussion that obtained by the researcher at Universitas Bosowa Makassar that there is improvement of students' speaking ability through Active Learning Activities. It can be concluded that the Active Learning Activities are effective to improve students' speaking ability at the Second Semester of English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Bosowa Makassar.

Keywords

Promoting, Active Learning Activities, Speaking Ability

Background

English as an international language plays an important and crucial role. In education, students try to use it as much as possible to be effective speakers and English language lecturers should provide students to frequently speak in their classrooms. Active learning activities are regarded as one of ways to facilitate the students. Active learning has been defined as "anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing". It has also been defined as "anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening, and taking notes". Active learning is "a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement². Active learning fosters understanding rather than memorization of facts; it encourages students to apply learning to different problems and contexts; it gives students more autonomy over their learning; and it helps students learn how to learn. Active learning means students engage with the material, participate in the class, and collaborate with each other. In active learning, we have the students to demonstrate a process, analyze an argument, or apply a concept to a real. 'Active learning' is the process of learning through engaging with the content. It means students are interacting with the material in any way that can promote active thought, through 'activities' for learning or through re-framing the note-taking process to encouraging thinking about the material rather than transcribing the content. Students are doing more than simply listening; the aim is skills-development rather than just conveying information; students engage in activities (e.g. discussion, debate, application of principles) aimed to promote higherorder thinking (such as critical thinking, analysis).

Active learning is based on a learning theory called constructivism, which asserts that learners construct their own understanding of a topic by building upon their prior knowledge. Instructors, therefore, do not simply transmit information to the learners via lectures, but rather create guided tasks, interactions, opportunities, and environments that are conducive to deep learning. A closely related theory social constructivism holds that active learning best takes place when the construction of knowledge occurs in collaboration with others. Concepts related to active learning include: Student-centered learning, where the diverse learning needs of students, rather than the need to push through content, are at the center of the learning process. Problem-based learning, where students are given a problem or scenario that requires to formulate questions, analyses evidence, connect evidence to pre-existing theories, derive conclusions, and reflect on their learning. Experiential learning, where students learn by engaging in authentic learning activities, that is, ones that replicate situations or problems they might encounter in real life or in a work situation.

Applying active learning in lectures has many benefits for student learning. The drop-off in concentration can be limited by using a different approach to learn each 15-minute (which means changing the way students are engaged, rather than changing topics). Active learning promotes recall and deeper understanding of material, as students are engaging with the content rather than simply listening to it. There

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are also equity benefits that flow from active learning, as lower-performing students have greater benefits from active learning than students who are already achieving high grades. Another equity outcome from active learning is that using different modes of delivery supports students who have different learning styles. Interacting with content through active learning has some compelling advantages over 'delivery mode' lectures. It helps to maintain student concentration and deepens learning towards the higher-level skills like critical thinking. It also helps to engage students who might otherwise struggle. Active learning can enhance learning, be more fun, and can help maintain concentration. When active learning is compared to traditional teaching methods (such as lecture), students learn more material, retain the information longer, and enjoy the class more. Active learning allows students to learn in the classroom with the help of the lecturer and other students, rather than on their own. The traditional teachers' function of transmitters of information has transformed into that of organizers and partners in students' learning. Nowadays, teachers and students play an equally active role in the learning process and active learning strategies refer to a variety of classroom activities ranging from long-term simulations to five-minute cooperative problem-solving exercises³.

Through active learning activities students can escape the traditional role of passive receptors and learn and practice how to apprehend knowledge and skills and use them meaningfully. However, ask students to actively participate in speaking in the classroom is a challenge even for the most experienced educators and a lecturer, it becomes challenge. Having above descriptions, the researcher is inspired to conduct research on **Promoting Active Learning Activities** to Improve Students' Speaking Ability. The research question is formulated as follows: Can the Application of Active Learning Activities Improve Students' Speaking Ability and based on the research question, the objective of this study is to find out the application of active learning activities can improve students' speaking ability.

Literature Review

Some researchers have conducted studies related to the use of active learning. The previous studies included. ⁴ identified 166 studies that reported an effect size when comparing the effects of an innovation (i.e., active learning approaches) to traditional instruction that did not include the innovation. Overall, they found that inclusion of the active learning approaches improved student outcomes. ⁵ describes active learning techniques transform the passivity of a traditional lecture-based large class into a student-centered learning environment, capitalize on the diversity of the student population and reduce reliance on the lecture and professor as conveyer of all knowledge.

⁶ reports working in groups not only increases students' active participation, it also encourages social skill development, enhances communication and increases independence. But it's also important to make distinctions about group discussion and discussion in groups. It's also important to provide students discussing free topics. The classroom must become like the world outside, where students use language spontaneously and communicatively. Discussion may take

place at any time. All the research findings above confirmed the importance of active learning. The researchers did not include the application of variety activities in active learning. Involving variety activities in active learning is important to make the students participate actively to speak in the classroom.

Constructivism as a Theory in Active Learning

Constructivism is a theory of learning that has roots in both philosophy and psychology. The essential core of constructivism is that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences⁷. Therefore, when teaching any idea or skill a teacher should try to understand the "previous experiences and prior knowledge" of students and build on this foundation. Piaget can be considered the father of the theory of constructivism. Constructivism is a theory on learning, which suggests that people acquire knowledge by experiencing things and in conjunction with knowledge that they already possess, "construct" their own understanding of these things. Constructivist theorists believe that people learn best when they actively construct their own understanding. The biggest impact that constructivism has had on education is that it moved the focus of learning from the teacher to the student 8. In the Constructivist theory, learning occurs when students become engaged in an activity that utilizes the content consistent with current knowledge and understanding is assimilated easily. New knowledge is constructed when students combine new information with existing knowledge through the process of reflection 8.

The constructivist theory says that the concepts follow the action rather than precede it and that new experience builds on an already existing knowledge. The ideas of constructivists led to four important principles of active learning; learners construct their own meaning (learners are not passive knowledge absorbers, they make knowledge meaningful and useful in a new situation); new learning builds on prior knowledge (learners combine old and new information and make sense of it); learning is enhanced by social interaction (learners resolve conflicting ideas in social settings participating in small group activities first and discussions within the entire class later); learning develops through "authentic" tasks (learners' activities should simulate those that will be encountered in real life)⁹.

Types of Constructivism Constructivism is a theory of learning to help the learners to construct something based on their own understanding by assimilating prior knowledge and new ones. According to 10 there are two major constructivist perspectives. They are Jean Piaget from Swiss and Lev Vygotsky from Russia. There are two types of constructivism. They are cognitive constructivism and social cultural constructivism. Cognitive constructivism was developed by Piaget. He is a Swiss Psychologist who describes knowledge development from a holistic and cognitive perspective, emphasizing that there are many channels that are used to construct understanding e.g. reading, listening, exploring, and experiencing 11. Cognitive constructivism developed as a reaction to behaviorist and information processing theories of learning 12. Social Cultural Constructivism (socio-constructivist perspective) Rampeng 3

Vygotsky is a Russian psychologist who introduces the constructivism through socio-constructivist perspective. In this case, the theory of Vygotsky emphasized in the learning based on context through the interaction with others. According to 11 constructing understanding through interaction with others in social environments in which knowledge is to be applied. Vygotsky as the expert of constructivism in socio cultural perspectives assumed that the theory came from the theory of language, thought and mediation in social environment. According to ¹² pure social constructivists believe that learning occurs via construction of meaning in social interaction within cultures and through language. Social constructivism classroom is rooted from Vygotsky's psychological theory that knowledge is not transferred from teachers to students but constructed in the students' mind. Meanwhile, there are some principles of constructivism that must be paid attention in applying this theory in teaching learning process 13 like knowledge is actively constructed by the individual, learning is both an individual and a social process, learning is a self-regulated process. Individual's learning is determined by the inborn characteristics and external factors that influence them, learning is an organizational process that enables people to make sense of their world, cognition serves the organization of the experiential world, not the ontological reality, reality represents an interpretation, learning is a socially situated activity that is enhanced in meaningful contexts, language plays an essential role in learning, and motivation is a key component in learning.

Besides that, ¹⁴ summarizes what he describes as the seven pedagogical goals of constructivist learning environments as to provide experience with the knowledge construction process (students determine how they will learn), to provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives (evaluation of alternative solutions), to embed learning in realistic contexts (authentic tasks), to encourage ownership and a voice in the learning process (student centered learning), to embed learning in social experience (collaboration) to encourage the use of multiple modes of representation, (video, audio text, etc.), and to encourage awareness of the knowledge construction process (reflection, metacognition).

Active Learning

Definition of Active Learning ¹ "states that in active learning, students participate in the process and students participate when they are doing something besides passively listening." (Weltman, p. 7) Active learning is "a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement.

Active learning is a process that has student learning at its center. Active learning focuses on *how* students learn, not just on *what* they learn. Students are encouraged to 'think hard', rather than passively receive information from the teacher. Research shows us that it is not possible to transmit understanding to students by simply telling them what they need to know. Instead, teachers need to make sure that they challenge their students' thinking. With active learning, students play an important part in their own learning process.

They build knowledge and understanding in response to opportunities provided by their teacher.

Active learning is highly reflective ¹⁵. Keeping the ideas of these scholars in mind, perhaps active learning is best thought of as a "student-involved learning continuum." At the low end of the spectrum there must be some involvement other than simply listening; at the extreme end of the spectrum, students are fully engaged in the learning process, exploring and applying ideas on their own. At this high end of the active learning continuum, it is posited that greatest learning benefits can be achieved. It is believed that in this setting students will be able to achieve the highest levels of learning - that is, they are able to synthesize and evaluate. Thus, active learning is thought of as a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement.

Creating Lesson That Inspire Active Learning One of the everyday tasks of teachers is planning lessons that inspire all students to stay actively, productively involved. Or, to be more specific, the goal is to craft lessons that inspire students to work with high dignity, steady energy, intelligent self-management, feelings of community, and alert awareness. The four strategies can help us to create lesson that inspire active learning. Action Flow Lessons: Planning lessons around active-learning strategies that flowtogether smoothly, coherently, interestingly. Imagine a classroom in which students sit through long lectures or endless, repetitive discussions or in which students struggle through worksheet after worksheet. Boredom will likely be a common experience. The remedy turns out to be quite simple: adding more variety to our lessons. To accomplish this, consider what we call Action Flow Lessons. As the name suggests, Action Flow Lessons are high on energy and movement. The aim is to get enough action going so students naturally remain involved, so neither threats nor rewards are necessary to keep students on task. Teaching in Layers, Not Lumps: Planning not for mastery at any one time, but rather planning to return to topics as often as necessary until mastery is reached. A quick pace during lessons need not result in inadequate learning. Quick Pace: Noticing when students are losing interest and promptly making achange. Life seems to be speeding up nowadays, and many students have internalized that fast pace. Few have patience for the slow and deliberate. As a result, teachers report more learning occurs when lessons proceed quickly. Efficient Classroom Structures: Settling on a few classroom routines that maximize learning and ease teaching. Some lesson plans work so well that they can be profitably turned into regular classroom routines. Once students learn these routines, the classroom develops a structure that is familiar to students, and that often eases our teaching chores and maximizes student learning.

What Are the Benefits of Active Learning? Active learning fosters understanding (rather than rote learning facts), which students can then apply to diverse contexts and problems. Active learning fosters students' learning and their autonomy, giving them greater involvement and control over their learning and giving them skills to foster lifelong learning in the future. Learners will be better able to

revise for examinations in the sense that revision really is 're-vision' of the ideas that they already understand. Some teachers perceive active learning as a form of progressive education, expecting the learner to learn by themselves or in groups with the teacher acting solely as a facilitator. As Professor ¹⁶ argues, "A teacher who says, 'I co-inquire with my students', 'I learn from them', 'We construct knowledge together' does not deserve that status." Active learning requires highly skilled teaching that uses a wide range of instruction that incorporates scaffolding of tasks, deep appreciation of how assessment can be used in support of learning, and recognition of the need for differentiation as learners are at different levels.

The Nature of Speaking Ability

Speaking ability consists of two words are speaking and ability. To avoid misunderstanding about the meaning of speaking ability, it will clarify one by one. 17, says that speaking is the capability in pronouncing sound or word to express or convey though, idea or feeling" opinion and wish. Another expert says that speaking is talk or speaks ¹⁸. If both speaking and ability are combined, so it means a capability to utter the articulation of sound to express or to deliver thought, opinion and wish to the other person. 19 states that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed, those observations are invariably collared by the accuracy and fluency. While, he also states that speaking is the product of creative construction of linguistic strings, the speakers make choices of lexicon, structure, and discourse. ²⁰ states that the classical meaning of speaking is the ability to talk, and to speak. The main purpose of speaking is to send the message for the other one or to be able to communicate about something in language and understood by someone who becomes a listener. 17 states that speaking is one of the language skills in oral form to express the speakers' ideas to everybody else. While, speaking is the informal interchange of thought and information by spoken words. Based on the explanation above, the writer argues that, speaking is a skill of language to convey messages, express the ideas to the listener.

Categories of Speaking According to Gamble in Sunarjo (2013) there are three categories of speaking as follows; speaking persuasively, speaking performance, and speaking informatively. Every opportunity for speaking in the classroom should be taken. It is by trying to communicate that students realize their need for language and by speaking that they increase their fluency and confidence.²¹ states that there are some characteristics of a successful speaking activity as follows; learners talk a lot as much as possible of the period allotted to the activity is in fact occupied by learner talk. Participation is even. Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participations, all get a chance to speak and contributions are evenly distributed. Motivation is high. Learners are eager to speak, because they are interested in topic and have something new to say about it, because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective. Language is of an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

Research Method

This research is quantitative research. The writer used preexperimental design, which used pretest, treatment, and post-test. The population of this research was the second semester students of English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Bosowa Makassar in 2017/2018 academic year which consisted of one class. In this research the writer used total sampling technique because there is only one class of the second semester students. The sample of this research consisted of 20 students. The instruments used to collect data are recording to record all of students' speaking process and test used in pre-test and post-test. To collect data, the writer had taken four meetings based on the following procedures: The pre-test was conducted in the first meeting, the theme is same as the posttest "The Impacts of Social Media". After giving pre-test, the writer gave students' treatment in the second and the third meetings. In the second meeting the writer applied Minute Paper Activity and Discussion Activity. In the third meeting, the writer applied Think/Pair/Share Activity, Buzz Groups Activity and Summarizing Activity. The writer used the test which measure three elements of speaking; they are accuracy, fluency and comprehension to get the students validation assessment in speaking.

The data on the students' speaking ability will be analyzed by using the following procedures:

Scoring the students' test results.

The rubric scales for assessing speaking skill on oral test criteria are described as follows:

a. Accuracy. Classification of students' speaking accuracy

Classi- Score Criteria fication

Excel- 5 Pronunciation is slightly influenced by the lent mother tongue a few minor grammatical and

lexical error but most utterance are correct.

Good 4 Pronunciation is still moderate influenced by the mother tongue but no serious phonological errors but only causing confusion.

Aver age

Pronunciation is influenced by the mother tongue, only a few serious phonological errors several grammatical and lexical errors.

Poor 2 Pronunciation is seriously influenced by the mother tongue with errors causing a breakdown in communication. Many basic grammatical and lexical errors.

Very 1 Seriously pronunciation errors as well as many basic grammatical and lexical errors no evidence of having mastered any of the language skill and areas practiced in the course.

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b. Fluency Classification of students' speaking Fluency

Clasifi Score Criteria

(1) (2) (3)

Excel-5 Speak without too great an effort with a fairly range of expression searches for the words occasionally by the only one or two unnatural pauses.

Good 4 Must try at time to search for words. nevertheless, smooth delivery overall and only a few unnatural pauses.

Aver- 3 Must try many times. Often must search for age desired meaning. Frequently fragmentary and halting delivery almost gives up making the effort at times range of expression.

Poor 2 Long pauses while he searches for the desired meaning. Frequently fragmentary and halting delivery almost gives up making the effort times.

Very 1 Full of long and unnatural pauses. Very poor halting and fragmentary at times gives up making the effort. Very limited average expression.

c. Comprehension Classification of students' speaking comprehension

Clas- Score Criteria sifica-

tion

(1) (2) (3)

Excel-5 Easy for the listener understand the speaker's intention and general meaning. Very few interruptions of clarification required.

Good 4 The speaker's intention and general meaning are clear. A few interruptions by the listener for shake of clarifications are necessary.

Aver- 3 Most of what the speaker says is easy to age follow. His intention is always clear, but several interruptions are necessary to help him in convoy message or to seek clarification.

Poor 2 The listener can understand a lot of what said, but he must constantly seek clarification cannot understand many of the speaker's more complex or longer sentence.

Very 1 Only small bits (usually short sentence and phrase) can be understood and then with considerable effort by someone who is to listen to the speaker.

Calculating the mean score of the students' speaking ability score using the following formula:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

∑X N Where

X : Mean score

 $\sum X$: the sum of all score. N: the number of students.

Finding standard deviation of the students' pretest and post-test by applying formula below:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)_2}{N}}{N-1}}$$

Note:

SD = Standard deviation

 $\sum x = \text{Sum of all score}$ $\sum x^2 = \text{Sum square of all score}$

 $\sum x^{-} = \text{Sum square}$ N = number of

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To find out whether the differences between pre-test and post-test value of test using the following formula:

$$t = \frac{D}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D_2 - \frac{(\sum D)_2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}}$$

where: t = test of significant

 $\sum D$ = The different score of the pre-test and post-test for each student.

D = The mean score from the different score of pre-test and post-test $\sum D^2 =$ The square of $\sum D$

N = The number of students

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Findings and Discussion

After analyzing the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test, below is the result of data analysis.

The result of Students' Speaking in Accuracy.

The Result of Analysis of Students' Speaking in Fluency

The Result of Analysis of Students' Speaking in Comprehension

Table 1. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	2,7	0,66
Post-test	3,5	1,38

Table 2. The Rate Percentage of Students' Speaking in Accuracy

No	Classification	Score	Pre-test	Post-test
			Freq.	Freq.
1	Excellent	5	0	3
2	Good	4	2	9
3	Average	3	10	6
4	Poor	2	8	2
5	Very Poor	1	0	0
Total			20	20

Table 3. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-testand Post-test

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	2,6	0,85
Post-test	3,3	0,49

Table 4. The Rate Percentage of Students' Speaking in Fluency

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	No	Classification	Score	Pre-test	Post-test
				Freq.	Freq.
	1	Excellent	5	0	0
	2	Good	4	2	7
	3	Average	3	9	13
	4	Poor	2	9	0
	5	Very Poor	1	0	0
	Total			20	20

Table 5. The mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	2,9	0,79
Post-test	3,6	0,87

Table 6. The Rate Percentage of Students' Speaking in Comprehension

No	Classification	Score	TTC test	Post-test
			Freq.	Freq.
1	Excellent	5	0	3
2	Good	4	5	9
3	Average	3	8	6
4	Poor	2	7	2
5	Very Poor	1	0	0
Total	l		20	20

Test of significance (t-test) The hypotheses were tested by using inferential analysis. In this case, the researcher used t-test (testing of significance) for independent sample test, that is, a test to know the significance difference between the result of students' mean scores in pre-test and post-test. If the level of significance (α) = 0.05 and the total of the sample is 20 (N=20) the t-test is presented in the following table.

Table 7. The probability value of t-test of the students' achievement

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T-test result of pre- test and post-test
Pre-test	8,25	1,92	
Post-test	10,7	2,11	10,65

Table 7 above shows that t-test value is much greater than t-table value. It means that the data as the result gave significant i mprovement. It was concluded that the application of active learning activities was able to give greater contribution in teaching speaking.

The overview of the research findings in applying active learning activities has been done to see the improvements of students' speaking competence. The research findings above showed some important points as follows: the improvements of students' vocabulary. Students got some new words during the discussions related the topic that they were discussed, the improvements of students' pronunciation. Several students improved their way in pronunciation words, and could say the sentences clearly, the improvements of students' grammar. Most of students could arrange text using appropriate conjunction and express their sentence in appropriate sentence, the Improvements of students' fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Most of students could deliver their opinion clearly, fluently and with comprehension. The students were not shy to speak anymore and most of the

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students had participated actively in the classroom. Active learning activities enabled the students to interact with the other members of the group. The interactions enabled the students to get support or even challenge from their mates. Thus, the students tented to make effort to be better. It is states by 24 that one of the best ways to create active learning is to give learning assignment that are carried out in small group of students. The peer support and diversity of viewpoints, knowledge, and skill help to make collaborative learning become a good part of classroom learning climate. Therefore, the students would have chances to interact, to transfer their knowledge, to be the model, and to be supporter and competitor towards their member of the group. Moreover, fundamentally the success of active learning activities should also be supported by teachers' job with students focused and provide opportunities and courage to actively engage students with materials and interaction ²⁵.

Conclusion

Active learning can be seen from the content and process. The activeness of class will involve the students of how they improve their knowledge, skill, and attitude. This study showed Active Learning Activities can improve students' speaking ability. The improvements can be seen from the increase of their scores after the treatments. The Implementation of Active Learning Activities can create an active class. It can be observed in students' attitude in joining the speaking class. The students become active in participating in each activity.

Suggestion

It is suggested to the lecturers to make a good planning for carrying out a good speaking class. It is suggested to the students to take every chance to practice in speaking because practice makes perfect. Therefore, never be shy to speak up and never be afraid of making mistakes because mistakes are the part of learning process.

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