The effects of English Habit Forming Activities in Fostering

Students’ Oral Communicative Competence

*(A Case Study in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern (PPM)*

*Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar)*

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ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this research were to obtain information about the habit forming activities done in the process of learning English in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar and to find the description about the extent to what the habit forming activities done in the process of learning English were valuable in fostering the students’ oral communicative competence.

This research applied descriptive qualitative research with case study method . The description about the concepts or phenomena are gathered and identified through nonparticipant observations, interviews and recordings and then, were analyzed and classified through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding into several main categories, i.e. individual setting, school setting, boarding house, habit forming activities in English.The subjects of this research were four 12th grade students (two male students and two female students) from Natural Science program who have been living and studying in the boarding school since junior high school level.

The results of data analysis showed that (1) habit forming activities done in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar were (a) English speaking day, (b) face-to-face conversation and (c) language assembly and (d) English courses by CLID (Central Language Improvement and Development), (2) having joined the English habit forming activities for more than five years and having good motivation in English, the subjects of this research show their good oral communicative competence in English. It can be analyzed and concluded through interviews with the subjects and the qualities of speaking tasks given to them. The subject has shown good oral communicative competence. A few errors found in their interview and speaking tasks do not cause difficulties to understand the overall meaning.

Key words : habit forming activities, oral communicative competence, case study

1. BACKGROUND

Mastering of English is essential for Indonesian people. This urgency has become a perceived and realized need. Since its release in 2006, our school based curriculum has also established some standards indicating the successful learning and teaching of English in Indonesia. The general standard objectives of English language teaching at secondary schools in Indonesia are determined as follows: (1) developing communicative competence both in oral and in written in order to reach the level of informational literacy; (2) raising awareness of the nature of English as a foreign language in order to compete with other countries in global community; and (3) developing comprehension of students about the relation between language and culture (Depdiknas RI, 2006).

Ironically, there are still very limited numbers of students who are able to communicate in English, although they have been studying English for about six years. In this context, Mattarima (2011) stated that there are many cases happen where students’ expectations do not match with the reality of learning result showing that their English proficiency is still very low or no significant English ability after many years of study. The learners who have spend much time for English in formal education still cannot speak English as expected. Theoretically, in order to reach the communicative competence, students should be encouraged to express what they mean in interacting among themselves and with native speakers of English, or English speaking people. This happens because of the lack of practice, low motivation and less communicative competence. The learners have low motivation and achievement in speaking English because they lack of opportunities in practicing it.

1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the following research questions:

1. What are habit forming activities done by the students in the process of learning English in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar?
2. To what extent are the habit forming activities done by the students in the process of learning English valuable in fostering the students’ oral communicative competence in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar?
3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with previous related studies and some pertinent ideas. The main point of the previous related studies is to undercover the facts and phenomena dealing with the English teaching and learning in Indonesia and the review of related literature deals with definition of learning, factors affecting successful language learning, good language learner, communicative competence and habit formation in learning English.

1. Previous Related Studies

Various studies describe that (1) students do not have adequate time and high habit forming activities in enhancing their communicative competence, (2) teaching English rarely focus on how to comprehend and communicate in English. Thus, teacher should provide chances create classroom activities for students to learn to communicate. And, the students should create opportunities to practice the language.

1. Some Pertinent Ideas

In this section, the researcher refers to some theories relating directly to the subject being investigated, namely:

1. Definitions of Learning
2. Factors Affecting Successful Language Learning
3. Good Language Learner
4. Communicative Competence
5. Habit Formation
6. METHODOLOGY
7. Type of the Research

This research is a kind of qualitative descriptive research employing to reveal deep exploration about student’s habit forming activities in fostering oral communication performance. This kind of research is also be classified as case study. By it terms, this research conducted a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. It implies that case studies have been used to bring out the details from sources of data to find out deep information about the case by doing intensive interaction to the actors of the case. As Gay et al. (2006: 401) mentioned that case study as a kind of qualitative research approach which explores the characteristics of particular entity, phenomenon or person.

From this view, the study case is not only for exploring the uniqueness of person but also other natural and social phenomenon or entity. Case study is also termed as a holistic study since it explores certain case holistically, including place, time, activities and others probable interrelated factors.

1. Subjects and Research Setting
2. Subjects

As a case study that intends to investigate student’s habit forming activities in fostering oral communicative performance, therefore, this study was designed to find out the students that can perform a good oral communicative performance. Thus, this study used a purposive sampling technique with students as the main subjects. The subjects have been living and studying at boarding school, studying in senior high school level who basically have learn English for years in their primary school and junior high school, having a good condition in psychologically and physically.

Based on the characteristics of the subjects and the preliminary research above, four students (two male students and two female students) are selected as the subjects of this research to represents the whole students. The two male and the two female subjects are. All the subjects are 12th grade students from IPA (Natural Science Program). They have been living and studying in the boarding school since junior high school level which also implies that have been joining the English habit forming activities for more than five years in the Islamic boarding school.

Beside the main subjects, there are several additional subjects who directly and indirectly influence the process of gathering the data. They contribute significant additional data in gaining the objectives of this research. Those intervening subjects are headmaster, English teachers, house teacher and parents.

1. Research Setting

This research was conducted in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas is one of four schools under Yayasan Pendidikan Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar. This school is located in an area that not far from the main road of Trans Sulawesi, exactly on Jl. Poros Majene KM 27, in the village of Lampoko, Campalagian district, Polewali Mandar regency. Living and studying in boarding school made the students fully concentrate to learn the general and Islamic knowledge. Pondok Pesantren Modern (Modern Islamic Boarding School) Al Ikhlas is one of 13 Islamic boarding schools in Polewali Mandar regency.

1. Data Collection

As a case study, this research provides the explanatory; exploratory; descriptive data that sharply from the investigation of a interconnected phenomena in the context in which they occur.

1. Technique of Data Collection

There were several techniques applied in this research to answer the problem statements. Those techniques will be explained as follows:

1. Interviews

In this research, the writer used semi-structured interview by which the interviewer develops and uses an 'interview guide/protocol and modify his questions to the specific interviewee, allowing for a more fluid conversation. The semi-structured interview format also permits two-way communication; both the interviewer and interviewee can ask each other question. The research equipment used in interviews is writing utensils and a cell-phone with recording features.

This is in accordance with Woods (2011) who classifies interview into two types, i.e. structured interview and semi structured interview. In the structured interview the interviewer asks the pre-planning of all the questions asked. It allows for exact replication of the interview with others and it is possible to generalize what you find out about the population from which your interview sample came. Structured interviews can be conducted in various modes: face-to-face, by telephone, videophone and the Internet. Questionnaires and surveys are common examples of structured interview tools.

1. Observation

In this research, the researcher applies nonparticipant observation which is also well known with external observation. This kind of observation is not directly involved the researcher in the situation being observed (Gay et.al 2006:414). The data is collected by doing observation the teaching and learning process in the classroom or other places where the habit forming activities are carried out. The researcher observed the habit forming activities which were done as extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, the data information gathered through observation were classified into descriptive information that directly records what the observer has specifically seen or heard on-site through the course of the study and reflective information that captures the researcher’s personal reactions to observations, the researcher’s experiences, and the researcher’s thoughts during an observation session.

1. Recording

Recording is very urgent aspect to do in this research, since the focus of this research is learners’ oral communication. It is almost impossible to analyze the aspect of communicative competence in detail during the learners performing their oral English communication. Without any recording, there were some of the activities related to the study that cannot be covered and recording was the best way to capture almost all the moments when the students join the habit forming activities.

1. Time of Data Collection

The data collection was planned to start on July 2013 until September 2013. Due to the transition of academic year and Ramadhan holidays, the data collection had to be prolonged until October 2013. Around three months, the researcher collected data from various sources with various techniques explained before until the data is saturated.

1. Data Analysis

Gay et al. (2006: 468) explained two types of data analysis in qualitative research. They are data analysis during the data collection and data analysis after the data collection. This data analysis guided the research to maintain the process of collecting data based on the focus of the study. Meanwhile, the data analysis after the data collection is valuable to interpret each piece of information and make a sense to them. There are several ways can be done to analyze the data in qualitative study.

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher applied Strauss and Corbin’s grounded theory method including: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

1. Open Coding

Straus & Corbin in Atmowardoyo (2008:33) defines open coding as part of analysis which is done specially related to naming and categorizing the phenomenon by checking the data carefully. And without this step, the next analysis cannot be done.

1. Axial Coding

Axial coding is a set of procedure in which after doing open coding, all the data is combined and related among categories. (Atmowardoyo, 2008: 63).

1. Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process of choosing the main category, relating one category to other categories systematically, validating the relationship, and revise the categories which need to be revised and developed (Atmowardoyo: 2008:83).

1. Validation Strategies

In case of validation, the researcher did the following techniques to examine the collected data:

1. Negotiations

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is research results should be negotiated with the informants to obtain valid data. Negotiations can be referred as one way to be taken in order to check the validity of the data (Haryanto, 1998:34).

Particularly in this research the researcher did the negotiation by showing the participants narrative description of the research result. The parts of the result that showed were several important events that happened during the process of collecting data. The respondent was asked to read the results. When the respondent found that the description did not match with the reality, they were welcomed to make corrections.

1. Triangulation

Triangulation is intended as the process of mixing the data or methods so that diverse points or standpoints cast light upon a topic. In line with the idea, Sugiyono (2012:369) mentions three kinds of triangulation methods for qualitative research namely, source triangulation, technique triangulation and time triangulation. In this process the researcher only did two kinds of triangulation methods, source triangulation and technique triangulation. Time triangulation was not applied under the reason that the research did not occur in long range of time with highly diverse phenomena.

The first method was the triangulation of data sources. The results of the data were compared from one respondent to another, especially the result of interviews. The researcher evaluated the results by checking out the perception or statement that came from the respondent, if there were some unclear statements or opinion the researcher asked the respondent feedback again in order to obtain a valid data.

The second triangulation method applied was technique triangulation. In this process the researcher compared the results obtained from every kind of procedure of collecting data such as interview, observation, and recording. The comparing was needed in order to obtain a valid data as the findings of the research.

1. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
   1. Findings

In this section, the researcher presents the description of research findings as a result of the analysis process that use three kinds of codification: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

In SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas the habit forming activities are mostly done in extracurricular setting in boarding school environments. This happens because time allocated in formal setting in the classroom is not sufficient. The rationales of carrying out the habit forming activities are to develop students’ competence, talents and interests

English habit forming activities are parts habit forming activities are done in this Islamic boarding school, beside:

1. reading holly Qur’an after Magribh until Isya time
2. doing prayer / shalat on time,
3. doing prayer / shalat congregationally
4. going to class on time,
5. going to dining room on time.
6. studying together after dinner and Subuh prayer
7. communal cleaning on Saturday afternoon
8. joining Arabic courses by CLID (Centre of Language Improvement and Development), i.e. language division whose responsibilities are to improve and develop the students language competence in English and Arabic.
9. having sport in the afternoon.

One of the English habit forming activities in this boarding school is English day. On this day, the students communicate using English everywhere they meet their friends or teachers, for example, in the dining room, or at boarding house and even in the classroom. Every informationor announcement to students is delivered using English through central microphone.

Face-to-face conversation is another habit forming activity in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas. It is done simultaneously between two persons for about 10 to 20 minutes after Ashar prayer and Subuh prayer on Tuesday and Friday every week alternately with Arabic. The conversation takes place inside the mosque and the outside the mosque with free topic. And those who have already possess good motivation and competence in English are accommodated in English habit forming activities.

To prepare and improve the students’ basic knowledge of English in order to be able to speak in English, the students are taught at regular courses held by CLID. As the name mentioned, CLID (Centre of Language Improvement and Development) is a language division in the boarding school whose duties are to develop and improve the students’ competence in English and Arabic. In the courses, the students can get knowledge in grammar or vocabulary and correction from the mistake they have made. Beside the boarding house teachers, there are selected members (mentors) who are responsible for teaching the junior students.

Dealing with the application of English habit forming activities, there is a language assembly aiming at maintaining the rules and the sanctions of English habit-forming activities and maintaining the reputation that SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas as prominent Islamic boarding school in English and Arabic.

* 1. Discussion

Habit forming activities refer to processes of forming of student’ behavior, attitude and competence which is relatively permanent and automatic through repeated actions. This is in line with Alcaraz (2003: 55) who formulates that habitis said to be a permanent disposition created by the repetition of acts; such disposition causes us to always act in the same way. The definition tells how English habit is formed , by the repetition of acts. However, the amount will vary from one student to other student and from one skill to the other.

In this case, the use of target language input is stimulus for habit formation and the boarding school environment is the place in which the stimuli are responded. As Patten and Williams (2007:22) view that the environment was seen as the controlling factors in any kind of learning. It means that language learning is seen as process of habituation and repetition of what was spoken and heard.

The existence of English habit forming activities show that practice plays an important role in the process of developing students’ communicative competence. As Ruiqing (2010) reveals that language is regarded as a set of linguistic habits and the linguistic habits are formed through practicing and strengthening the associations between stimuli and responses. Therefore, based on it, learning a second language means the formation of a set of linguistic habits.

In line with the idea, Bessette (2011) conveys that language learning is habit formation of which successful language practice and performance with good pronunciation, grammatically correct sentences and new words will become behavior. With the monitor from teacher and from parents, those behaviors become automatic. However, it takes a long time and the same process must be repeated over and over again with variations.

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1. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Agenda of Collecting Field Note

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date / No of field Note | Activities | Main Concerns | Results |
| 1/7/2013  FN 1 | Visiting SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas | * Probing study * Intention to conduct a research | * Getting approval from headmaster * The research can be conducted if there is a letter of permission |
| 12/7/2013  FN 2 | Visiting SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas | * Showing letter of research permission to headmaster * Getting more information about schools, programs, English teachers, students and learning activities | * Getting permission from headmaster, introduction with the vice head master * More information and description about schools, programs, English teachers, students and learning activities. |
| 15/8/2013  FN 3 | Visiting SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas | * Interview with the English classroom teacher * Introduction with the subjects of the research | * Information about the English curriculum applied in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas * The names of the prominent students and their readiness to be the subjects of the research |
| 16/8/2013  FN 4 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Interview with the English boarding house teacher | * Confirmation about students who are going to be the subjects of the research * Information about the habit forming activities |
|  | * Interview with the subjects of the research | Interview recording containing  information about the   * individual setting of the subjects * their living in boarding house * their joining in the habit forming activities |
| 20/8/2013  FN 5 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | * Observing the boarding house * Interview with the House Teacher | * Information and description about the number, facilities, the condition, the size of the boarding house * the rules of the boarding house |
| 25/8/2013  FN 6 | Visiting, calling subjects parents | Interview about the reason for supporting their children to stay and study in SMA Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas, what their son do at home dealing with English | Information about the reason for supporting their children to stay and study in SMA Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas, what their children do at home dealing with English during the holiday |
| 28/8/2013  FN 7 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the habit forming activities | Information and description about the habit forming activities |
| 30/8/2013  FN 7 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the English Speaking Day and face-to-face conversation | Information and description about the English speaking day |
| 31/8/2013  FN 7 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the habit forming activities (Communal cleaning) | Information and description about the habit forming activities |
| 24/8/2013  FN 9 | Visiting the boarding house | Observing the English course held by CLID | Information and description about the activities English course held by CLID |
| 6/9/2013  FN 8 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the English Speaking Day and face-to-face conversation | Information and description about Face-to-face conversation |
| 7/9/2013  FN 9 | Visiting the boarding house | Observing the English course held by CLID | Information and description about the activities English course held by CLID |
| 10/9/2013  FN 8 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the English Speaking Day and face-to-face conversation | Information and description about Face-to-face conversation |
| 21/9/2013  FN 9 | Visiting the boarding house | Observing the English course held by CLID | Information and description about the activities English course held by CLID |
| 24/9/2013  FN 9 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the English course held by CLID | Information and description about the activities English course held by CLID |
| 27/9/2013  FN 10 | Visiting the boarding house in the afternoon | Observing the English Speaking Day and face-to-face conversation | Information and description about the English speaking day and Face-to-face conversation |
| 28/9/2013  FN 9 | Visiting the boarding house | Observing the English course held by CLID | Information and description about the activities English course held by CLID |
| 1/10/2013  FN 11 | Giving speaking tasks, dialog and discussion | Finding the quality of oral communicative competence of the subjects | * Interview recording containing information and description about quality of oral communicative competence of the subjects |
| 3/10/2013  FN 12 | Giving speaking tasks, telling recounts and retelling narrative stories | Finding the quality of oral communicative competence of the subjects | * Interview recording containing information and description about quality of oral communicative competence of the subjects |
| 9/10/2013  FN 13 | Asking other teachers to assess the quality of speaking tasks performed by the subjects | Assuring that the researcher assessment to oral communicative competence of the subjects | Format of scoring / assessment sheet of other assessors |

**Appendix 2: Observation Protocol**

The researcher followed the following observation protocols including a number of questions for viewing how habit forming activities were carried out in fostering the students’ oral communication competence:

1. What are general the conditions and description of the school, students, English teachers, boarding houses, programs and the facilities of Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar?
2. Has the new curriculum (2013 Curriculum) been applied in SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas Polewali Mandar? What is the reason?
3. Are the habit forming activities integrated in intra curricular process of teaching and learning or carried out in extracurricular process? What are the rationales?
4. What are the kinds of activities held and regarded habit forming activities in this Islamic boarding school/ SMA Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas?
5. What are the kinds of habit-forming activities dealing with English which foster the students’ oral communicative competence in English?
6. How do the teachers carry out those English habit forming activities?
7. Who are taking part in those activities?
8. How are the responses of the students?
9. What are the rules and sanctions in applying the English habit forming activities?
10. To what extend the rules and sanctions in applying the habit forming activities effective for fostering the students’ oral communicative competence in English?
11. What are the significant effects of the English habit forming activities on fostering the students’ oral communicative competence in English?

Appendix 3

**Interview Guideline**

In collecting the data, the researcher researcher followed the observation guidelines, as follow:

1. Interview Guideline for the headmaster

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | Why is this school called Pesantren Modern? What is the difference between pesantren and pesantren modern? |
| 2. | *Translation* :  How many schools are there in Yayasan Pendidikan Al Ikhlas, in the same complex? |
| 3. | How wide is the whole complex of PPM Al Ikhlas? |
| 4. | How many classes are there in SMA PPM Al Ikhlas in academic year 2013/2014? |
| 5. | *What about curriculum applied in this school?* Has this school applied 2013 Curriculum? |
| 6. | How many students are there in SMA PPM Al Ikhlas in academic year 2013/2014? |
| 7. | How about the English teachers? |
| 8. | What is the difference of those two kinds of English teacher? |
| 9. | What kinds habit forming activities applied in this pesantren? |
| 10. | Then, about habit forming activities in this pesantren. What are the rationales of applying those activities and how are they done? |

1. Interview guideline for the classroom English teacher
2. What curriculum does this school use?
3. Is the time allocated in the curriculum adequate or sufficient to develop the students’ communicative competence?
4. What are the habit forming activities dealing with English in this school?
5. Are there any students who have been living and studying here possess good oral communicative competence?
6. Interview guideline for the boarding house English teacher

|  |
| --- |
| 1. What are the rationales of performing the habit forming activities? |
| 1. Why are the habit forming activities mostly carried out as extracurricular time? |
| 1. What are habit forming activities done in this boarding school? |
| 1. Are there habit forming activities dealing with English? |
| 1. What are the procedures / steps in doing habit-forming activities? |
| 1. What are the topics of dialog? |
| 1. Is there any grouping? What are the rationales? |
| 1. Who guides/leads the students? |
| 1. What are the activities or the duties of CLID? |
| 1. Tell me more about spying the students on English day |
| 1. And what do you do in Language Meeting / assembly |
| 1. And what are the sanction for the language breakers? |
| 1. In what ways do the activities help the learners develop their communicative performance? |
| 1. Are there any constraints in performing the habit formatting activities? |

1. Interview Guideline for the subjects

|  |
| --- |
| 1. What is your reason to enter SMA Pesantren |
| 1. How long have you been living and studying here? |
| 1. Where did you graduate you junior high school |
| 1. How do you like your living in boarding house, how do you like it? |
| 1. How is the condition of the boarding house, Is it enough for you? |
| 1. What are the rules applied in your boarding house? |
| 1. What kind of punishment will the students get ? |
| 1. And what are the habit forming activities clone in thin school? |
| 1. Is there my habit forming activity dealing with English? |
| 1. How do you like the activities? |
| 1. Do you think that English habit forming activities are important? |
| 1. What are your problems in learning English |
| 1. By English habit forming activity, can you reduce your problems in English? |

1. Interview Guideline for the house teacher
   1. How do you describe the characteristics of the subject?
   2. What does the subject usually do outside the classroom?
   3. Is the subject diligent to join the habit forming activities in English?
   4. What do you think about the subject’s competence in English?
   5. What does the subject usually do to improve his/her competence in English?
2. Interview Guideline for the Subjects’ parents

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| --- | --- |
| 1) | Apakah putera /puteri Bapak tinggal dan belajar di SMA Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas atas kemauan Bapak atau kemauannya sendiri?  Translation:  Does your son/daughter live and study in SMA Pesantren Modern because of your wish or his/her own wish? |
| 2) | Apa alasan Bapak mendukungnya tinggal dan belajar di SMA Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas?  Translation:  What is the reason to support him/her to live and study in SMA Pesantren Modern Al Ikhlas? |
| 3) | Pada saat libur di rumah, apa yang anak Bapak lakukan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggrisnya?  Translation:  *What does your son/daughter do to improve his English when he is at home vacation?* |