**THE APPLICATION OF ONE-ON-ONE LEARNING TO SOLVE ENGLISH SPEAKING PROBLEMS: A STUDY ON EFL LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study was designed to elaborate about the application of one-on-one learning as a learning solution for English speaking problems of EFL learners. This study was focused on the EFL learners’ opinion about one-on-one learning and the speaking activity gained by the EFL learners in one-on-one tutoring. Qualitative research design was used in this research. The means of data collection involved semi-structured interview, documentation, and observation considering speaking activities. In collecting data, the researcher involved the EFL learners who take course focused on speaking at an English course in Makassar. There were 10 EFL learners who were ready to be interviewed. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed them based on the procedure of data analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) which consisted of three steps; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The result of this research study revealed that the EFL learners stated different opinions about one-on-one learning method. They said that one-on-one learning method is good, excellent, efficient, effective, enjoyable, flexible, and quiet. Then, there were some speaking activities usually gained by the EFL learners during the learning process to improve their speaking ability. Those speaking activities were discussion topic, describing picture, speaking games which consist of speaking board games and dominos game, question and answer, telling daily activities, telling experience, telling preferences, role play, and retelling movie.

**Keywords:** One-on-One Learning, speaking

**INTRODUCTION**

English learning is highly expected to be successful, especially in Indonesia whether it is in formal or informal education. In formal education, learning English is focused on all skills. Learners are expected to master all skill. Yet in non-formal education, it is sometimes focused on one skill such as speaking. Therefore, they can choose what they want to focus on, how they learn, and where they want to learn.

Regarding to the skill, most learners want to learn more to improve their English speaking skill as a foreign language. Since speaking is a way to communicate and express feeling. It is also related to the statement stated by Al Hosni (2014) that speaking is the active use of language to express meaning. However, some people say that speaking English is more difficult than other skills. It is also emphasized by Thornbury (2005:1) that speaking is much more complex so some learners have problems in speaking.

Hence, some people who are interested to study English try to find out a good learning environment that can help them overcome their English speaking problems. In Makassar, some courses offer one-on-one learning as the alternative for the EFL learners to improve their speaking skill as it is done by one of the course institutions.

The course institution is an English course which focuses on speaking skill by applying a private method or one-on-one learning (one trainer for one student). It is aimed to help people improve their speaking ability. This course could be the right choice to speak English for busy people in which the principle of this course is flexible. Since this course mainly for the busy people, it offers six choices when studying in this course. First, the learners are free to choose the trainer. Second, they are free to determine where they want to study. It gives choice for the learners to study at the office, at their house, or at their office. Next, the learners are free to arrange their own schedule as long as the trainers of the course do not have a full schedule. The other is learning English without memorizing tenses. The learners will not be pushed to memorize the tenses because grammar is not the focus of this course. Before starting the learning process, the learner will be asked about what they really need to learn. For instance, the learner is a businessman. Therefore, he wants to focus on how making a presentation or make a call. The last one is free practice. The learners can practice their speaking ability wherever they are via online such as Skype, Facebook, or BBM.

Regarding to the flexibility to study English at the course, many people are interested to learn English there. Another thing that makes them interested is the learning environment. As it has been mentioned above that the course institution applies private method or one-on-one learning. The learners, there study English face to face so they can get more attention from the trainer.

In that place, everyone can enroll as a learner, whether a young learner or an adult learner. Most learners are teenagers and adults. They are from a different educational background. They want to study English for different purposes. After attending the class for several meetings, most of them are successful and others are still poor in speaking.

Hence, the researcher thinks that it is important to conduct this research in order to know whether one-on-one learning is good or no and to find out the learners’ opinion about one-on-one learning and the speaking activities given in one-on-one tutoring . Besides that, this is also urgent to conduct because class size is one of the factors influencing the success of learning process, notably in learning a language such as English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, it is interesting to conduct this research because it is different from other research. This research will focus on one-on-one learning. Meanwhile, the other research focus on large class and mostly the object of the research is the students of formal education.

This research is also feasible to conduct because the researcher already knows the situation and problems occurring in the course institution since she was a trainer for around three years. Besides, there are no many research studies about one-on-one tutoring even though the concept of one-on-one learning was applied in the Ancient Greek. Merrill in Bleistein and Lewis (2015:3) in his research shows that one-one-one learning can be more effective than classroom instruction. Therefore, the researcher attempted to carry out a research entitled **The Application of** **One-on-One Learning to Solve English Speaking Problems: A Study on EFL Learners.**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Overview of One-on-One learning**

Learning in a large class is not a new learning environment because most of the learning process done with it. Most learners study in a large class. In the context of class size, learning is not only done in a large class, but also in small class such one-on-one learning. The term sounds new for some people so there must be a brief explanation about what it is. One-on-one learning is the learning environment involved two persons; one teacher for one student. According to the history, the concept of one-on-one learning was used in the Ancient Greeks when Socrates tutored a young slave boy. Bleistein and Lewis (2015:1) states that one- on- one instruction has led to significant learning gains and provided personalized learning that cannot be achieved in larger language classrooms.

**The Reasons to Choose One-on-One Language Learning**

Studying a foreign language is not easy. For some learners, they need some methods to master it. Yet in choosing the method, learners have some reasons. According to Watskin (2010), there are some reasons why one-one-one learning is chosen.

The learners are easy to get their pace, optimum chance to speak and practice about the language learning. They also can ask for some specific topic or vocabulary. Besides that, the learners are easy to manage their schedule and location to study and easy to pursue points that the learners have not understood. The other reasons, the learning is more intensive and quick, the learners can focus on the skills needed, the learners can learn more about their tutor and they will be more confident because there is no intimidation for shy.

**Some Factors Affecting Speaking Ability**

Whether speaking is difficult or easy, some researchers have isolated a number of important factors affecting speaking ability. In Thornbury (2005), the factors have been divided into three categories. Here are they:

1) Cognitive factors

(a) Familiarity with the topic; the greater the familiarity, the easier the speaking task. This is why it is generally easy to talk about your job or your family, than it is to talk about something very removed from your day to day life.

(b) Familiarity with the genre; giving a lecture or a speech will be harder if you are unfamiliar with those particular genres.

(c) Familiarity with the interlocutors; generally speaking, the better you know the people you are talking to and the more share knowledge you can assume, the easier it will be.

(d) Processing demands; of the speech even involves complex mental processing, such as that invloved in describing a complicated procedure without recourse to illustration, it will be more difficult than if not.

2) Affective factors

(a) Feeling towards the topic and/or the participants; generally if you are well disposed to the topic you are talking about, and or to the other participants, the easier it is likely to be.

(b) Self-Consciousness; being put on the spot can cause anxiety which will have a negative effect on performance, likewise, knowing (believing)you are being evaluated can be prejudicial.

3) Performance factors

(a) Mode; speaking face-to-face where you can closely monitor your interlocutors’ responses, and where you can use gesture and eye contact, is generally easier than speaking over the telephone.

(b) Degree of collaboration; giving a presentation on you own is generally harder than doing it with colleagues because in the former case you cannot count on peer support.

(c) Discourse control; on the other hand, it is often easier if you can control the directions of events, rather than being subject to someone else’s control.

(d) Planning and rehearsal time; generally the more time to prepare, the easier the task will be; telling a joke is usually easier the second time round.

(e) Time pressure; if there is a degree of urgency, it is likely to increase the difficulty for the speaker.

(f) Environmental conditions; trying to speak againts a background of loud music or in poor acoustic conditions is difficult.

**Problems on Speaking**

In learning a language, speaking seems more important than other language skills such as reading, writing, and listening. Knapp and Seidlhofer (2009: 401) noted that speaking is not an easy part of language learning. They assume that people might read and write well, but the ability to speak does not always follow. Therefore, a foreign language learner sometimes wants to focus only on speaking task. However, there are still many problems faced in speaking activity in the classroom.

Ur (1996: 121) puts four problems in speaking activity. The first is inhibition. Some learners are often inhibited to say something in a foreign language. They are worried about making mistakes and shy to speak English. Therefore, they do not want to speak. The second problem is nothing to say. The learners sometimes are lazy to think when a teacher asks them to talk. Even though if they are not inhibited. Expressing what they feel seems very difficult so they will not say anything during the speaking class.

Another problem is low or uneven participation. Giving speaking activity in a large class is often boring if only one participant can talk. The talkative students sometimes dominate the class. This situation can make other learners down to speak till the end of the class; the passive learners will not speak at all.

The last problem is the use of mother tongue. This problem always appears in every student’s interaction because they often use their mother tongue in expressing idea. They tend to use it because it easier to be uttered. In classroom activities, students talk using mother tongue both to other students and teachers. Hence this habit must be minimized by English language learners through cooperative learning includes team interview technique.

**Speaking Activities**

In terms of speaking activities, sometimes a teacher gets difficult to give an appropriate activities especially in the classroom because every student in a class has different preference. Therefore, a teacher should find the best activities that can cover all the students’ need. a teacher also has to know the types of speaking activities in order that it can help the teacher design or create a new speaking activity. Piccolo (2010) divided the speaking activities into two types. The first is **task-based activities**. These are activities that ask students to accomplish a specific task by following simple instructions. These types of activities are generally preferred by students as they have a clear understanding of when they have accomplished what was asked of them. Tasks such as “reach an agreement,” “Find someone who,” “Describe the media” are common ways of presenting such tasks. These tasks are also an excellent way to activate language that has been presented in class, providing focused situation in which students will be focused to use the target language.

The second type of speaking activities is **topic-based activities**. These are activities that allow the students more freedom. By choosing topics that your students will identify with, they are given a chance to express their thought and opinions in a more natural way. Activities such as Discussions or Debates are common examples of these types of activities. These tasks let students experiment with the language that has been presented to them in class over a longer period of time. It is a great way to see what students have retained from the lesson.
One must be very careful when choosing the topics to present in class. They must be age appropriate, appropriate for the cultural and religious beliefs of the students, but also thought-provoking and interesting. Remember that what your students find interesting can be very different from what you find interesting.

Similarly, Ur in his book (1996) also divided the speaking activities into two type, task-based and topic-based activities. He argued that task-based activites ask learners to perform something, where the discussion process is a means to an end. Meanwhile, topic-based activities ask learners to talk about a (controversial) subject, the main objective is clearly about discussion.

**METHOD**

**Participant**

At present, the clients of EHOST stand at 1469. The clients are various. Most of them are teenagers and adults. A few clients are children. Yet the researcher decides to choose teenagers or adult learners as the EFL learners as the subjects of this research because the researcher thinks the learners prefer studying through one-on-one to large class.. The subjects were chosen through purposive sampling technique. According to Gay, *et. al*. (2006), sampling in qualitative is almost always purposive.

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

The data collected in this research were done by using three instruments; observation, interview, and documentation. The data were taken in order to find more infomation about the EFL learners’ opinion about one-on-one learning and the speaking activities used in the learning system.

At the first, the researcher observed the learning process the get data about the speaking activities. As it has been noted by Gay (2006), that in observation, the researchers obtained the data by simply watching the participants. While observing the learning process, the researcher made field-note.

Next, the data used in this research was interview. The type of the interview was semi-structured interview. According to Gillham (2005:70), semi-structured interview is an interview in which the kind and form of the questions go through a process of development to ensure their topic focus. In the interview, the EFL learners were interviewed one by one while recording the interview to save the data.

In addition to observation and interviews, information was gathered also through documentary evidence. According to Creswell (2012), for qualitative study, document is one of good sources that can provide some information about what is being investigated.

After all the data collected from three instruments, they were classified into some categories based on the results of the interview and other instruments. Meanwhile, the technique of data analysis used to analyze the data was based on Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) data analysis.

**RESULTS**

After collecting the data and analyzed them, there are some findings about the EFL learners’ opinion related to one-on-one learning method and some speaking activity that EFL learners usually gained from the teachers when they learn about speaking especially in one-on-one learning method.

**Learners’ Opinion about One-on-One Learning**

All the opinions about one-on-one instruction can be drawn in the following figure:

One-on-One Learning

Learners’ Opinion

Quiet

Flexible

Enjoyable

Effective

Efficient

Excellent

Good

*Figure:**Learners’ Opinion about One-on-One Learning*

Here are some sample quotes from the learners about one-on-one learning

Some learners stated that one-on-one learning is good. They decided to learn English in a course which has good learning method and suitable for them. They have some reasons why they said the learning method is good for them and for any who wants to take course especially English speaking. The transcription of the interview about the learners’ opinion could be seen in the following interview quotes:

 *“ Menurut saya bagus karena mengajarnya lebih fokus ke satu orang sehingga kita betul-betul memperhatikan kalau misalnya trainernya menjelaskan.”*

[I think it is good because the teaching focuses on one person so I really pay attention if the teacher gives explanation]. **(Appendix 1a, the interview of LA, June 1st, 2015).**

One-on-one learning method was also stated as an excellent learning method especially for someone who wants practice their speaking. The interviewee said “*Excellent*!” **(Appendix 1f, the interview of LF, June 15th, 2015).**  Furthermore, the interviewee said why one-on-one learning method is excellent because it is easy to know our weakness and the correction is directly given in learning. As it has been stated in the interview as follows:

“...*bisaki pribadi tahu kelemahan ta eemm terus bisaki diajar tentang ini itu baru bisaki emm kan disini misalnya ada yang tidak ditahu baru dikasi tahumi sama trainernya baru diajar maki begitu kalau belum dimengerti*.” [ we can easily know our weakness, the teacher can teach anything, and we can emm knwo directly what we do not know because the trainer teach us if we have not understood]. **(Appendix 1f, the interview of LF, June 15th, 2015).**

**Speaking activities in one-on-one learning**

The result of the findings about the speaking activities in one-on-one learning method can be seen in the following figure:

**Speaking Activities**

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the finding, there were some opinions about one-one-one learning stated by the EFL learners. The learners gave their comment based on their learning experience using one-on-one to improve their speaking ability. The EFL learners said that one-on-one instruction is good, excellent, efficient, effective, enjoyable, flexible, and quiet. They gave good comment about the learning method since they feel that there is progress about their speaking.

On the other hand, one EFL learner stated that one-on-one learning is good because the students have much opportunity to speak during the learning process. The statement is related to what Ur (1996) stated that uneven participation is one of the problems faced by the learners in learning speaking English.

Additionally, all the opinion from the EFL learners in the interview showed a significant relationship with the reason to choose one-on-one learning cited by Watskin (2010). He mentioned that people may choose to study through one-on-one method because the learners are easy to get their pace, optimum chance to speak and practice about the language learning. They also can ask for some specific topic or vocabulary.

Being a part from the EFL learners’ opinion about one-on-one learning, there was another finding in this research. It was about the speaking activities in one-on-one instruction. The result of the findings about speaking activities shows that there are some speaking activites that a teacher can give to the learners especially those who learn English through one-on-one instruction. These findings can help teacher to teach in one-on-one learning environment. Since preparing the speaking activities in one-on-one is sometimes very difficult because most of them are for the classroom instruction.

There are some differences about speaking activities which were written by Kayi (2006) with the findings in one-on-one learning. Kayi divided the speaking activities into discussion, role-play, simulations, information gap, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, picture narrating, picture describing, and find the difference. Meanwhile, the finding shows that speaking activities for one-one-one class are discussion, describing pictures, question and answer, telling daily activities, speaking Games; board games and dominos games, telling experience, telling preference, role-play, and retelling movie.

Furthermore, Picollo (2010) divided speaking activities into two types, topic-based and task-based activities. Given this point, the result of the findings about speaking activities also can be divided into two based on the types given by Picollo. From the findings, discussion topic, role-play, question-answer, and speaking games-board games and dominos games are categorized as topic-based activities. Whereas describing pictures, telling daily activities, telling expereince, telling preference, and retelling movie are categorized into task-based activities.

**CONCLUSION**

The result of the present study displayed that most learners quoted good comment about the implementation of one-on-one learning. The data also gave some information about some activities in improving speaking performance. Based on the research findings and the discussion, there are some major points concluded.

Overall, the data analysis showed that learning in a small class size is good for some learners because they can concentrate without any disruption from other learners. Regarding with this learning environment, it is compatible for mousy learners because there are only two persons involved in the learning process. Therefore, the learners can speak unashamedly.

Next, the success of learning is influenced by many factors. One of the factors is an environmental condition of learning. Some learners cannot focus on their studies because the situation of learning is not good. Therefore, they have to find a good place to study a foreign language such as English.

Another thing that we can conclude from this research is about the speaking activity. In learning English, especially speaking, speaking activities can be considered as the important parts of the learning because the learners will practice their speaking through the activities.

Also, the activities which are appropriate for one-on-one class is discussion topic and question-answer because those activities give much opportunity for the learners to speak more. Based on the finding, those activities are frequently gained by the learners.

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