

# **IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY USING THE TEAM-GAMES-TOURNAMENT TECHNIQUE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to study the application of the Team-Games-Tournament Technique for teaching speaking to Grade X students at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur, Aceh Besar. The research method used in this study was Classroom Action Research which is to improve the quality of the teaching performance and the learning processes of the students as well as to detect and solve problems found in the teaching-learning process. Two cycles were conducted for this research. The subjects of this study were the 24 students. These students were first given a pre-test and then a post-test at the end of each cycle. The pre-test and the post-tests were administered by asking the students to describe a picture. The data was processed manually. From the results obtained, only 12% (3 students) passed the KKM in the pre-test and 88% (21 students) did not pass. The passing percentage increased to 54% (13 students) after the 1st cycle whilst 46% (11 students) still did not pass the KKM. After the last cycle, the percentage that passed the KKM increased to 96% (23 students) and only 4% (1 student) did not pass. Thus the implementation of the TGT technique over two cycles was deemed highly successful, not only the Grade X students improved their speaking ability but also the teacher improved her ability to teach speaking English. Accordingly this study recommends that other teachers of speaking English EFL should also try using the TGT technique.

**Keywords:** *TGT Technique, Speaking Ability, Action Research, Co-Operative Learning Techniques.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

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Although English native speakers are not the largest language population of the world, English has become the largest lingua franca in global use by both native and non-native speakers combined. The economic and cultural impact of the USA plus the UK and the Commonwealth countries especially India has led the way for English to prevail as the most used language in various areas such as science, technology, art, even in teaching and learning. This leads people to attempt to use English in major parts of their life as their second or as a foreign language (Kosar & Bedir, 2014). This condition has also been felt in Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language. Ever since independence in 1945, English has played a vital role in Indonesia, so that Indonesian students need to master English as well as possible.

Concerning speaking, the curriculum for Senior High Schools for grade X requires students to be able to express transactional and interpersonal meanings or spoken monologues and to communicate in such genres as narrative, procedure, spoof/recount, report, news item, descriptive, anecdote, exposition, discussion, commentary, and review (Depdiknas, 2006).

Based on the researcher's experience for more than eight years as an English teacher, most senior high school students seem to have great difficulties in speaking English. It is frequently found that the students learn all the grammatical items of English, but they cannot use them to express their ideas, feelings, and experiences to others in oral communication. In part this is because they only speak English in class but not in society, so they are not accustomed to speaking English. This makes accuracy and fluency in speaking English difficult for them. They also usually lack vocabulary and do not get enough practice in intonation, pronunciation, tone of voice, and stress. Considering the passing grade (KKM) which is 75, only 40% of students can reach it. Because of this, the teaching process is unsuccessful since the school expects 85% of their students to reach the KKM.

Based on this gap between the curriculum and reality, the researcher decided to do this study at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur Aceh Besar where she has been teaching as an English teacher. She found that her students faced several problems in speaking. She considered that the students in this school needed to be encouraged and engaged in English because it will most likely be useful for their future careers. Besides, for herself, she wanted to innovate her way of teaching to be more effective for the teaching-learning processes with her students.

There are some previous studies that the researcher would like to review: the first was done by Nasution (2013) at SMA Muhammadiyah Kisaran. She informed her students of their scores in each evaluation she gave and it was found that her teaching-learning processes improved and ran better. Students could broaden their thinking while learning and exploring more. Results showed that use of the Teams-Games-Tournament improved students' achievements in speaking. A study by Aljauhariy (2013) at SMP Negeri 1 Rejotangan also had a satisfying result at the end. She mentions that her students' scores increased after two cycles of treatment.

### **Problems of Study**

The four questions posed for this study were: (1) How will the teacher implement the TGT technique for teaching speaking with the first year students at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur Aceh Besar? (2) To what extent will the teacher's teaching of speaking improve by using the TGT technique to teach speaking to these first year students? (3) Will there be any significant difference in the students' scores for speaking ability after the TGT technique treatment? Finally, (4) What will be the students' response to the use of the TGT technique with them for teaching-learning speaking?

### **Success Indicators**

To measure the improvement in speaking grades after using the Team-Games Tournament, the following success indicators were set based on the school KKM as below.

**Table 1.** Success indicators (Source: KKM SMAN 1 Suka Makmur, 2014/2015).

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Success Indicators</b>
Students score above 75%	Students are more active in speaking and speaking ability improves after the TGT treatment.
Teacher scores above 75%	The teacher can apply the TGT technique to improve and develop the students' speaking skills.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study were aimed to enrich knowledge of teaching English using the Team-Game-Tournament Technique. The results from this research may benefit teachers with an effective technique for teaching speaking. The study is expected to provide information for

improving activities in teaching speaking and for teachers' understanding of the application of the Team-Game-Tournament technique through classroom action research. Finally other researchers interested in conducting similar research can probably use this study as a reference.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Nature of Speaking**

According to Brown (2004), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Brindley (1994) defines speaking as an oral skill that is used to express a person's understanding, convey intended meaning accurately with sufficient vocabulary, use language in appropriate contexts, and interact with other speakers fluently. Some of the meanings may be able to be understood automatically while others may need to be processed first. Lewis and Hill (1993) add that speaking is a process that covers many things in addition to the pronunciation of individual sounds. Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is a complex cognitive skill; speakers produce not only sounds but also a set of meaningful words and body language that can be understood by listeners either explicitly or implicitly.

There are some problems in speaking as mentioned by Jones (1996). According to him in speaking, learners tend to explore their own ideas and expose them to others. He clarifies that the ability to speak is seen as the most essential communication skill since it is basic for communication and is the most difficult skill after writing. Besides, Khamkhien (2010) has proposed some factors that influence the learners' speaking ability including native language, age, experience in learning English, phonetic ability, attitude, and motivation. When it comes to native language, the learner usually speaks the way he does in his own language. Also, Khamkhien (ibid) adds that the more we practice, the easier it is to speak and formulate ideas in English. Since language learning is made successful out of habit, it is important to notice that those who have learned English for a certain length of time, conform faster and better to delivering ideas although some mistakes can generally still be found. Then, phonetic ability matters. Some learners with better phonetic ability can perform better listening which can lead to more success in speaking.

To solve the problem of speaking English, the student must understand the importance of English as a foreign language. They also need to be motivated in order to avoid shyness and fear of speaking English in public. Once they feel confident, the knowledge of English given by the teacher can be absorbed and practiced well in real communications such as telephone conversations, obtaining information or expressing an opinion. Furthermore, the teacher needs to create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence by applying appropriate strategies.

Razmjoo and Ardekani (2011) have classified speaking strategies such as interference of mother tongue, error correction, accuracy, body language and substitution, educational-aid methods and instruments, memorization and summary, and sensitivity toward changes. They further divide the categories into two classifications of strategy: off-line and on-line strategies. Off-line strategies are educational-aid methods and instruments, memorization and summary, and sensitivity toward changes. On-line strategies are those strategies employed at the time of speaking and include interference of mother tongue, error correction, accuracy and sensitivity toward changes.

There are a lot of activities that can be employed in a speaking class to keep the students actively occupied. Indeed, speaking class teachers have to know a lot about this since occasionally, a single activity lasts longer than was previously planned. Some categories are listed below:

1. Controlled Speaking Activities
  - Interview Activities
  - Picture Activities
  - Playing controlled roles
  - Information-gap Activity
2. Free Speaking /Free Role Play Activities
  - Simulation Activities
  - Discussion Activities
  - Performance Activities
  - Oral Reports

### **Team Games Tournament**

The speaking skills of students are greatly influenced by the teaching-learning technique used by the teacher. This is in line with Brown (1994) who says that an approach or theory of language and language learning plays a great role in the teaching-learning processes.

According to Webb (1989), the Team-Game-Tournament technique is one technique that can change the atmosphere to be better based on relevant theory and adjusted with the developments in the society, as well as gives contribution to the principle that education should be learner-centered. The Team-Games-Tournament technique is useful for improving students' achievements, involvement, and motivation. It is in accordance with what Slavin (1995) has stated that the positive interdependence created by groups helps to improve the motivation in the group. Referring to the study done by Johnson and Johnson (1999), there is a motivation within group members that encourages movement toward the accomplishment of the desired common goals. Based on that assumption, the final results greatly depend on each student's behavior and motivation to help the group to win and get a reward. In other words, the group motivation given by the teacher stimulates the students to reach the goal with their teammates (Slavin, *ibid*).

Harmer (2007) has said that since speaking is a productive skill, the students actually have to produce language themselves. In other words, speaking is an oral production of language. In order to achieve this purpose, the students need to be confident and have sufficient knowledge of English. Therefore, the researcher as the English teacher decided to do an action research study using a cooperative learning model called the Team-Games-Tournament (TGT) in her speaking class.

The Team-Games-Tournament is one of the cooperative learning techniques that can be used to improve students' speaking ability. In this technique the students are grouped in heterogeneous teams. According to Slavin (1995), the steps used for the Team-Games-Tournament technique are as follows.

#### 1. Introductory Class Presentation

In this phase, the researcher delivers the material for the day to the students, i.e. the activities they will be doing plus giving some motivation to ignite the students' interest to study. This phase is basically teacher-centered but only takes a very short time, around 5-10 minutes.

## 2. Team Division

In this step, the researcher divides the students into several teams, each with 4 or 5 heterogeneous students which means that the members of each team will be students with different abilities.

## 3. Games

Now, the teacher distributes the prepared task. The student teams have to do the task which is presented in numbered pictures. The task will be to tell the story in the pictures orally. Each team takes a turn to present their story to the class.

## 4. Awards Group

Lastly, the researcher announces the best team i.e. the team with the best score. This should motivate the other students in the following meetings.

As a teaching and learning technique, the Team-Game-Tournament has some advantages as mentioned by Sdayu (2014, p. 66) since (a) the Team-Games-Tournament technique initiates student-student verbal interactions, (b) it gives the students in each team motivation to solve the problems of their task together, (c) it encourages responsibility amongst students, (d) it increases motivation and desire to learn amongst the teams (e) it motivates the students to compete and (f) it creates a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere in the class.

However, Sdayu (ibid, p. 67) also adds that the Team-Games-Tournament also has some disadvantages in teaching-learning, such as it is time consuming since the tournaments can take up a lot of time. Also the absence of students' during the tournament sessions may disturb the whole members' success in the tournament.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Setting and Subject**

This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur, Aceh Besar. The researcher chose this school because she had a lot of information about the achievements and the behavior of her students concerning their English. While doing this research, she used English while teaching the class, including when she presented materials or gave instructions.

The subjects of this study were the researcher and the first year students at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur Aceh Besar and class X-2 in the academic year of 2015/2016. The researcher chose them because they are also English teacher who are basically knowledgeable about both English lessons and the principles of teaching it. So that the researcher

undoubtedly put her trust in them. The class which she taught had 24 students (7 boys and 17 girls).

### **Research Design**

This is a classroom action research (CAR) study since this is appropriate for the aims of the study, which is to improve the quality of teaching and the teaching-learning processes for the students.

In conducting this study, the researcher followed procedures for CAR proposed by Johnson (2007, p. 75). These procedures make use of a cycle via: (1) planning the action, (2) implementing the plan, (3) observing (4) reflecting and then run the cycle again.

In doing this study, the researcher also collaborated with two English teachers as the observers of the class activities. The observers were responsible for observing the actions and discussing the results of their observations with the researcher to get information about the effect of the actions on the students' speaking skills.

### **Research Instruments**

The instruments used in this study were as follows:

#### ***Observation Check List and Observation Templates***

These instruments are vital in the venture to answer the first research question. The observers observed the researcher using the teacher's observation sheets during the activities in order to be able to measure the researcher's ability in the teaching-learning processes of the Team-Games-Tournament technique. Any possible additions or suggestions from them could be directly written into the free observation templates. The observers also observed the activities of the students using the observation sheets to note whether the students were improving their skills in speaking or not.

#### ***Test***

In an effort to answer the second research question, the teacher used two types of tests, a pretest and a post-test. The teacher tested the initial speaking ability of the students with the pre-test which was given before the students were given the treatment. It was given to find out the speaking abilities i.e. the accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility of the students before the treatment.



### **Questionnaires**

To get data to answer the third research question, the teacher distributed a questionnaire to the students at the last meeting in order to find out the response of the students toward the TGT activities that they had already followed. The questionnaire had 15 questions that asked about their motivation for learning English before and after the treatment.

### **Data Analysis**

To determine the mean score for each test, the formula below was used (Sudjana, 2002, p. 112):

$$M_{x,y} = \frac{\sum x,y}{N}$$

Where:

M = sample mean

x = individual scores from pre-test

y = individual scores from post-test

N = number of participants

$\sum$  = accumulated total

Meanwhile, analysis of the results from the questionnaire used the percentage formula suggested by Sugiono (2007, p. 43) as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

In which:

P = Result expressed as a percentage

F = the frequency

N = number of cases

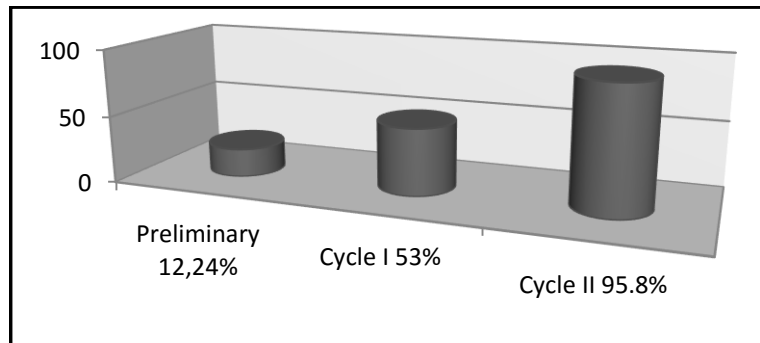
## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Research Findings**

The preliminary study was conducted on August, 4th, 2015. It found that the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur were lacking in interest in speaking as they had problems with vocabulary and self-confidence. Meanwhile for pronunciation, they were average.

In the preliminary study, the researcher conducted a pre-test. Where only 3 students reached the pass mark (KKM) for English, which was 75. The mean score from this test was 52; only 12.5% (3) of the students

scored equal to or above the KKM, 21 students were below the KKM. The % scores after Cycle I and Cycle II are shown below:



**Figure 1.** Students' scores.

From the chart above, we can see that in the Cycle I post-test 50% of the students passed KKM 75, while in the Cycle II post-test, 93% of the students passed KKM 75. This issue leads to the conclusion that the research was successful. The researcher also noted several points in the field notes from the collaborators as follows:

1. The students showed high enthusiasm for getting involved in the TGT technique.
2. The students looked as if they were having fun and enjoyment throughout the teaching-learning processes.
3. The students were attracted to this game.
4. Only a few of the students were not active in the teaching-learning processes.
5. The teacher was better at class management after the two cycles had been carried out.
6. The teacher learned how to manage her time better, how to be more effective and efficient during the teaching-learning processes.

From the questionnaire, the researcher found that 95% of the students had a positive attitude towards the use of the TGT technique.

## **Discussions**

First of all, the teacher introduced and used the Team-Games-Tournament technique in teaching speaking to the first year students at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur, Aceh Besar. First, she introduced the technique by asking the students several questions about the topic that would help them recall their prior knowledge about it, the researcher assumed that TGT was more like playing games rather than a conventional learning

activity. Then after she had divided the class into teams, some students who thought they could not participate stayed silent until the researcher came and got them to join in. With her help, in Cycle I, these silent students also tried hard to get involved in the discussions. By Cycle II, most of the students spoke without hesitation during the discussions. This was what got them good scores in the post-tests. Nevertheless, there was still one student who remained silent without giving a try.

The third question was to find out whether there was a significant difference in the speaking scores of the students' after the Team-Games-Tournament technique treatment to improve their speaking ability. In the preliminary study, the average score was 52. Then after Cycle I, the mean score rose to 63. After the revised TGT technique application in Cycle II, the mean score rose to 76 which were more than the KKM.

The last question was about the response of the students to teaching-learning speaking using the Team-Games-Tournament technique. Based on the data from the questionnaire, 95% of the students had a positive response toward the TGT technique.

These results show that teaching speaking using the TGT technique increased the students' ability in speaking better than any technique that the researcher had used with the students before. This result was in line with the previous research done by Nasution (2013) at SMA Muhammadiyah Kisaran. She found three advantages from using the TGT technique, they were: 1. the students' scores improved; 2. the students could broaden their thinking skills while learning and exploring more; and 3. the students' achievements in speaking also increased. Then, a study by Aljauhariy (2013) at SMP Negeri 1 Rejotangan also revealed that after two cycles of treatment using the TGT technique, the students' score increased and they performed better in speaking.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the research findings for teaching speaking using TGT technique at SMAN 1 Suka Makmur Aceh Besar, the conclusions are: (1) the teacher's implementation of TGT technique was a success since the scores of the students exceeded KKM 75. Also the success indicators which were 75%, reached 93% after Cycle II; (2) the speaking ability of the students improved significantly as can be seen above where their average score improved from 52 in the preliminary phase, to reach 63 in the Cycle I post-test, and finally to reach 76 in the Cycle II post-

test; and (3) the students had a positive attitude toward the use of the TGT as can be seen from the results from the questionnaire where more than 95% of the students had a good response to the implementation of the Team-Games-Tournament technique.

### **Suggestions**

To follow up these findings, it is suggested to other teachers to use the TGT technique since it can build the ability of students in speaking and expressing their ideas effectively. English teachers are recommended to use this model as an alternative means of teaching speaking for students. To school principals, the implementation of TGT needs small classes with less than 25 students so that the TGT can be implemented efficiently and effectively without having to face troublesome situation with over-large classes. However, instruments and materials also need to be well prepared to implement this technique. To academicians, the researcher hopes that there will be other studies following this research using the TGT technique for teaching speaking or other skills. Perhaps this technique can also be used for teaching-learning to write.

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