

## THE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS ON COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND ITS EFFECT ON ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL

Anindhiasti Ayu Kusuma Asri<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta,  
Anindhiasti\_ayu@udb.ac.id

Agustina Srirahayu<sup>2</sup>, Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta,  
agustina@udb.ac.id

Pineda Prima Yoga<sup>3</sup>, Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta,  
pineda\_prima@fikom.udb.ac.id

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of the application of Collaborative Learning in practicing English speaking skills and to investigate the extent of the effect of Collaborative Learning on students' English speaking skills. This research was conducted at Duta Bangsa University, Surakarta. Respondents in this study were lecturers of English courses who used Collaborative Learning as one of their teaching techniques and second semester students of Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta. The application of collaborative learning techniques to students at Duta Bangsa University Surakarta has provided space for students to improve their English skills. Although insignificant, the application of this technique cannot be considered a failure.*

**Keywords:** *Collaborative Learning, Speaking Skill, English.*

### INTRODUCTION

Basically, the main purpose of learning English is to communicate. English is an international language used to communicate, especially in the business and business world. Mastering English is a requirement for those who want to enter the business world and other economic activities. Mastering English can increase one's value or value in the world of international work. Richards (2006: 19) states that mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for students who consider English as their second language or as a foreign language. This demand refers to the fact that speaking is the most common way of communicating in real life (Shastri, 2010: 70). Meng & Cheng (2010) stated that one way to encourage students to be actively involved in training their communicative competence is to use communicative activities or communicative tasks. This leads to the application of Collaborative Learning or in English called Collaborative Learning (CL). According to Barkley, et al (2005: 4):

*"To collaborate is to work with another or others. In practice, collaborative learning has come to mean students working in pairs or small group to achieve shared learning goals. It is learning through group work rather than learning by working alone. There are other terms of collaborative learning, such as cooperative learning, team learning, group learning, or peer-assisted learning. "*

The theory explains that what is meant by Collaborative Learning is learning activities in pairs or groups to achieve learning objectives. Collaborative learning activities include group presentations, group projects, problem-solving, debates, study

teams, and peer-study. Collaborative Learning System provides opportunities for students who do not understand to be able to learn more from students who are smarter or capable. Students can interact with each other more easily than communicating directly with teachers/lecturers. In group work, each member has the same opportunity to issue ideas, ideas and opinions which are then combined to solve a problem or just to add insight.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was conducted at Duta Bangsa University Surakarta, which is one of the private high schools in Surakarta. It is located on Jl. Bhayangkara no. 55-57, Types, Surakarta is under the auspices of the Kusuma Bangsa Adi Prakarsa foundation. The study programs available are the S1 Information Systems program, the S1 Informatics Engineering program, the Informatics Management D3 program, and the Computer Engineering D3 program. The method used in this research is qualitative research based on phenomena, symptoms, facts, or social information. Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (2005: 3) state that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people or observable behavior. This approach directs researchers to view a background and individuals as a whole (holistic), not isolating individuals into variables, but viewing them as part of a whole. This research model is descriptive. Descriptive research is research conducted to describe and interpret something, such as existing conditions or relationships, developing opinions, ongoing processes, consequences or effects that occur, or about ongoing trends (Furchan, 2004:447).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that this research is categorized as a case study research. Yin (2003: 13) defines case study as a qualitative approach that investigates contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts and the boundaries between phenomena and contexts are not clearly visible. Researchers have little or no opportunity to control the events to be investigated. The unique strength of the case study method is its ability to relate to various types of evidence namely documents, tools, interviews, and observations.

This case study research was chosen for several reasons. First, the focus of this case study research is to explore and explain phenomena in real life contexts. Second, by conducting this research, it is possible for researchers to obtain detailed information, among others, about the perceptions of Duta Bangsa University students regarding the collaborative learning system implemented by English course lecturers and its influence on the development of students' English skills. Third, conducting case studies allows researchers to explore situations that occur in the classroom during the teaching and learning process (Yin, 2003: 15).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The perception of English lecturers on students' English speaking skills and how English lecturers choose or create collaborative learning activities.**

Based on the results of the interview, she said that for the students of Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta themselves, grammar or grammar in speaking activities is not as taken into account as when writing. According to her, students still need to be motivated

to use English. Pronunciation is also, according to her, the most important factor in speaking English. She also added that the students of Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta still needed to be improved. One of the factors that hinder the improvement of students' English skills is the fear of speaking in English. She believes that by applying collaborative learning, it is expected that students will get more ideas and foster collaboration between students. Students are also expected to be more motivated in using English because of the support from their group mates.

In choosing the right collaborative technique, the lecturer admitted that it all depends on the material presented and the number of students in one class. She said it was a little difficult to focus on speaking because there were too many students in one class. She found it difficult to individually monitor students' English speaking skills.

The choice of Collaborative Learning technique by the lecturer depends on the material and the number of students. For example, when the English material is WH Questions, she uses Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT). After each group has studied the material, then each group member will compete against other group members to get points. The most common is the Group Investigation (GI), where one group must make one text that contains an observation and a collection of facts. Group Investigation is a collaborative technique that focuses on writing skills. However, she hopes that by using this technique at least the vocabulary of students will increase.

In conclusion, the lecturer feels that students' English skills in Duta Bangsa Surakarta still needs to be improved. Students must be motivated to be more confident in learning English. To motivate and facilitate students, she applies Collaborative Learning techniques. According to her, the Collaborative Learning technique has several advantages, including being able to develop ideas or ideas because of the discussion process. In addition, students can also cultivate a sense of tolerance and responsibility. In delivering instructions, she uses spoken and written language with the hope that students will better understand the order or task. However, she still often uses Bahasa Indonesia when explaining instructions. Environmental factors also affect whether or not the students' speaking ability increases because according to her mastery of the language will be achieved if the language has become part of individual habits.

### **Students' perceptions of the application of Collaborative Learning as a medium to practice English speaking skills.**

In this sub-chapter, the researcher will describe, first, students' perceptions of the importance of English especially in speaking, secondly, students' perceptions of Collaborative Learning and its effect on their English skills. The description was written in accordance with the results of interviews and observations of the lecture process. The first thing is the student's perception of the importance of English. According to the interview (Ms1, Ms2, Ms3, Ms4, Ms6, and Ms7) English is an international language that must be mastered because it will be useful for finding work and communicating. Other students (Ms5, Ms9, Ms10, Ms11 and Ms12) stated that in the MEA (Asean Economic Community) era, people are required to be able to speak English.

A student (Ms14) argues that many media and places use English as the language of instruction, but for now English is not often used in daily communication. (Ms13)

revealed that for her to be able to speak English is a matter of pride. Meanwhile, according to (Ms8), English must be learned so that it is easy to communicate with other people and can understand the conversation. Next is the student's perception of collaborative learning.

In general, students understand collaborative learning as group work. In other words, collaborative learning, according to students, is learning that consists of several members to study together, such as a discussion forum. However, each student has a description of the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative learning according to their respective perspectives. (Ms1) and (Ms2) have a perspective that tends to be the same. They argue that collaborative learning is learning in groups that are more process-focused (cooperation). They also pointed out that differences of opinion that occur between group members often hinder the completion of tasks. (Ms6, Ms8, Ms10, Ms11 and Ms12) have the same opinion about the benefits and drawbacks of collaborative learning. They say collaborative learning can foster a sense of togetherness and kinship between friends. However, sometimes this intimacy actually makes the group not focus on completing the task and joke more.

Another opinion regarding the benefits of Collaborative Learning which is almost the same was also expressed by (Ms3, Ms4, Ms5 and Ms7). They argue that cooperation or group work can train how to respect and listen to the opinions of others and can expand knowledge because of the different opinions or findings of each group member. The weaknesses expressed also have almost the same perspective. They reveal that there are often people who only rely on other members because their mastery of English is still limited.

With the weakness of this learning system, it causes obstacles in completing the given task. The same perspective was put forward by Ms1, Ms3, Ms4, Ms6 and Ms 7. A significant obstacle when conducting collaborative learning or group work is the differences of opinion by each group member which causes task completion tends to take a long time.

Meanwhile Ms5, Ms8 and Ms10 have the same opinion regarding the obstacles faced. They stated that with group work, sometimes there are some students who, in the end, do not understand the material given. They do not understand the final conclusion of a discussion so that the students do not understand the material that the lecturer is trying to convey. Ms11 and Ms12 reveal that many students ended up assigning the task to only one person.

Thus it can be concluded that Collaborative Learning for students can increase a sense of cooperation, tolerance and provide more knowledge arising from differences of opinion between group members. However, there are also obstacles that must be faced by students to complete the group assignments. The difference of opinion between students is one of the causes of the length of time the task is completed. In addition, there are students who only rely on other friends sometimes also hinder the completion of assignments. This is due to the different English language skills of each student. For those who feel weak, they tend to delegate responsibility to friends who are more capable.

### **The Effect of Collaborative Learning on Students' English speaking skills.**

The next description is the effect of Collaborative Learning on students' English speaking ability. In this description, students give their opinion about the effect of the learning. Almost all students have the same answer. They admitted that more or less Collaborative Learning helped them improve their speaking skills in English. Ms4, Ms5 and

Ms7 have slightly different opinions from the above students. They revealed that the use of the Learning method Collaboration in improving speaking skills depends on the ability of the students themselves. So that not all students have a significant increase.

Based on the results of the study, there are two conclusions according to the researcher. First, the lecturer admits that he has used Collaborative Learning optimally, but not all students are able to master the material or topic being discussed. This is due to several factors, including educational background that affects the understanding of the material, environment and self-confidence of each student. The lecturer consider that in speaking or speaking activities, grammar is not the main focus. However, it is seen that occasionally the lecturer justifies the students' pronunciation of the wrong words during presentation activities. So, it can be concluded that grammar is taught implicitly or deductively. Students are expected to learn from their mistakes and to have better understanding of the correct pronunciation.

The role of the lecturer in this case is as a facilitator. The lecturer mentioned that she often gave directions to students to be able to continue his explanation when they made a mistake. This means that the lecturer has a role as a facilitator in learning. Apart from being a facilitator, the lecturer also have a role to monitor students. This is done by observing one group and another and occasionally participating in the discussion. If there is a group that is out of line with the intended topic, the lecturer will explain again in front of the class. Thus, it can be concluded that the lecturer has given instructions optimally, but not all students can master the material because of the influence of the students' basic mastery of English, the environment and low self-confidence.

The result of the second study is that the effectiveness of Collaborative Learning has different impacts on the progress of students' speaking abilities depending on the English ability of the group members. In a group, each student has different abilities. Likes or dislikes in the course affect the motivation and comprehension of the material.

Collaborative learning, in this case is a group discussion or group work, providing space for students to be able to explore their thoughts better. Some students gave their opinion that with group work, they can better understand the ideas of other group members and learn to be more respectful of other people's opinions. However, the obstacles faced are also not small. They recognize that internal conflicts are due to differences of opinion often occurs, although it can be overcome.

### **CONCLUSION**

The application of collaborative learning techniques to students at Duta Bangsa University Surakarta has provided space for students to improve their English skills. Although insignificant, the application of this technique cannot be considered a failure.

Lecturers have taught optimally and students have done their job well. Improving the ability to speak English in students themselves cannot depend on the lecturer alone. Motivation, selfconfidence, educational background and environment also play a role in whether the speaking skill of the students improve or not.

## REFERENCES

- A. Furchan. 2004. *Pengantar Penelitian dalam Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Barkley.E.F., Cross.K.P., & Major C.H. 2005. *Collaborative Learning Techniques*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Jones, Leo. (2007). *The Student-Centered Classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lexy J. Moleong. 2005. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Meng, Yaru & Cheng, Bing. 2010. *College Students' Perception on the Issues of Task-Based Language Teaching in Mainland China*. Journal of Language Teaching and Research.
- Richards, Jack C. 2006. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Shastri, Pratima D. 2010. *Communicative Approach to the Teaching of English as a Second Language*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications.