Improving Speaking Skill of Islamic Senior High School Students in Palembang by Using Readers' Theatre

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to look at the improvement on the eleventh grade students' speaking skill who were taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy at one of Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. Quasi-experimental design with a non equivalent pretest-posttest design was used in this study. By using purposive sampling, the eleventh grade students at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang consisting of 114 students were selected to be 50 students. They were classified into 2 groups (control and experimental groups). Each class consisted of 25 students. The speaking test used as the only intrument in this study were administred twice as pre-test and posttest. In analyzing the data, paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test in SPSS 21 were used. From the calculation of paired sample t-test, it was found that the p-output was 0.000. Then, from the result of independent sample t-test, the p-output was 0.000. Since the p-outputs were lower than 0.05, it could be concluded that teaching speaking skill by using Readers' Theatre strategy had a significant improvement and significant difference on the students' speaking skill. It means that readers' theatre strategy was effective in improving students' speaking skill at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang.

Keywords: quasi-experimental design, readers' theatre, speaking skill

Introduction

As we know that most of the people in the world use English as a language to communicate and interact among each other. Crystal (2003) states that English is a global language. Most of people from all over the world use English as a second language even as a first language (Genc & Bada, 2010). It is not only the language for science but also aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism in the modern world. There are four skills in English which are involved in communication namely; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Harmer (2001) reveals that there are two types of skills in English; receptive and productive skills. Receptive skill covers listening and reading and receptive skill covers speaking and writing. Some experts believe that among the four language skills, speaking is categorized as one of the most important ones. Zaremba said that for communication, speaking is the most required one among the four macro English skills (as cited in Boonkit, 2010, p. 136). Moreover, English speaking skill is one of the language skills that is required in global interaction or communication (Arham, Yassi, & Arafah, 2016). Thus, in communication, speaking is very crucial skill compared to the other four skills. As an international language, English speaking skill becomes the most favorable skill needed for learners in Indonesia. Indonesian students who have good English speaking proficiency are easy to get a job. It is in

line with Pandey and Pandey (2014) who believe that social life can be improved and a better job opportunities can be achieved if communication skills in English are enhanced.

However, English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2016 showed unsatisfactory result of English proficiency for Indonesian students. Indonesia was in the 32nd position out of 72 countries for English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2016 and it was categorized as moderate with the score 52.94 (Education First EPI, 2016). In 2013, 2014, and 2015, English Proficiency Index (EPI) of Indonesia was also categorized as moderate, but in 2012 English Proficiency Index (EPI) of Indonesia was categorized as low, and very low in 2011 (Education First EPI). These results showed that Indonesian students have problem in English proficiency.

Indonesian students face many difficulties to communicate in English because of many factors. Meng (2009) claims that most of the students feel that speaking is not easy due to several reasons; they are shy, nervous and afraid in creating errors. Furthermore, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) state that the difficulty in speaking class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language. The anxious learners feel apprehensive, worried, and even dreadful. They also have difficulty in concentrating, become forgetful, and become sweaty in speaking activity. Those problems mentioned above are also faced by the eleventh graders atone Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. A preliminary study was done by interviewing the English teacher on May 2nd, 2017 and the students on May 23rd, 2017 at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. It showed that most of students still faced many difficulties in speaking English.

Firstly, the result from interviewing the English teacher showed that the students had lack of vocabulary and grammar. They also rarely used and practiced their English. In giving responses and answering the teacher's questions, they used their mother tongue, and when they used English, they mispronounced a lot of words. In addition, when the students were put in a discussion forum, a conversation or a talk, they seemed to have a lack of confidence by rejecting to take a role in front of the class. They also felt shy and afraid to speak up. In addition, the results above also showed that English teachers of that one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang had problems when they taught the students in the classroom. In creating the attention grabbing activities, the English teachers still found it difficult. They only used games as a technique or strategy and gave the students questions. In fact, there are so many kinds of techniques and strategies that can encourage students' interest of learning English speaking. Secondly, the results from interviewing the students showed that most of the students at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang had less interest towards English because it was seen as a problematic and complex subject. They also recognized that they had difficulties to express their opinions orally and did not understand how to speak English correctly in terms of spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In addition, they were reluctant to share their ideas due to being afraid of producing inaccuracies. Additionally, to dig more information about the students' capability in speaking, I conducted a small speaking test. When I gave them some questions in English, it was difficult for them to translate and create the words even when they combined Indonesian language and English to respond and answer my questions which showed that they had low mastery of vocabulary. Besides, it was also found that their syntax and pronunciation were also found unsatisfying. They could not even arrange an easy simple sentence and mispronounced many words. I applied Readers' Theatre (RT) to help the teacher at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang to solve the problems which were faced by the eleventh grade students in speaking. In Readers' Theatre (RT), the two or more readers orally present a story using scripts. It is not difficult to apply due to the less preparation needed such as; full costume, stage sets and memorization of

scripts. In RT, the students do not need such preparation. There are only several steps involved in RT; (1) the story is read, (2) the story into a script by using social negotiation is selected, (3) the interpretations are formulated, practiced and refined, and last, (4) a show for the audiences by reading aloud from hand-held scripts is performed (Leong, 2009).

Previously, there are many studies which were conducted by involving Readers' Theatre (RT). First, Agustin (2015) who conducted a research at SMAN 14 Palembang, Indonesia to the eleventh grade students found out that there was a significant improvement in students' speaking skill after they were taught by using Readers' Theatre. She also revealed that this strategy was effective in improving student's speaking skill of the eleventh grade students of SMAN 14 Palembang, Indonesia. Another study by Martha and Ardi (2013) who did a research to senior high school students in Padang, Indonesia. They found that there was a significant improvement in the students speaking skill after the students were taught by using Reader's Theatre. It can be said that this strategy gave the students opportunity to show their feeling, emotion, and ideas at the same time. It was also found that this strategy could overcome the lack of vocabulary problem. Therefore, the research problems in this study were formulated in this following questions; (1) was there a significant improvement on the eleventh grade students' speaking skill who were taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy at one of Islamic Senior High School in Palembang?, and (2) was there a significant difference in the speaking skill between those who were taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy and those who were not?

Literature Review

The concept of speaking

Boonkit (2010) states that for communication in any language, speaking is the most required one among the four macro English skills, especially when mother tongue is not used by the speakers. Its purpose is to deliver verbal or spoken message of all languages. Furthermore, speaking is one of the productive skills in English. It is used to express other meanings to other people by involving speech. There are two major aspects in speaking skill. They are fluency which can be defined as speaking at a normal speed without hesitation, and repetition or self-correction and accuracy which means the use of correct forms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Aguilera & Filologia, 2012). Then, Dewi (2016) argues that speaking is as a skill which needs many exercises and practices, otherwise the students' speaking cannot be improved. Therefore, speakers need a lot of practice so that the speakers can speak fluently in a foreign language. In addition, speaking is also used as a way of transmitting the message through the words of mouth (Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, 2011). They add that speaking is one the productive skills in the oral mode. They also reveal that speaking is not an easy skill since it is more complicated and involves more than just pronouncing words.

The concept of Readers' Theatre

Actually, Readers' Theatre has been defined in various ways. According to Hsu (2011), Readers' Theatre is a teaching method composed of two concepts: readers and theater. "Readers" can be defined as students who repeatedly read a variety of literature, such as short story, folk tales, passages in the textbooks, etc., using their oral expression, facial expression

and necessary bodily movement, with no props, action or costumes involved, to allow the listeners (also a kind of readers) understand and follow the script. While, "Theater" refers to the readers who have to perform in front of a crowd of people and entertain them using voice, facial expressions, gestures and timing. More importantly, these vital entertainment techniques allow the readers to enjoy and interact with the story that they are reading.

Readers' Theatre is one of the theatre types; it is used as a teaching method (Su, 2014). Prescott (2003) also believes that one of dramas or theatres, known as Readers' Theatre, is proven to be particularly effective in building oral skills especially fluency. Ng and Yip (2010) assert that drama which is also called Readers' Theatre as one of effective approaches in teaching oral skills. They state that Readers' Theatre is a kind of oral presentation of drama, prose or poetry by two or more readers. Moreover, Readers' Theatre is not difficult to apply due to the less preparation needed such as; full costume, stage sets and memorization of scripts (Dixon, 2010; Leong, 2009; Leong & Boucher, 2001; Sloyer, 1982). Furthermore, Patrick (2008) reveals that this strategy provides opportunity to the performers to read the script of the story aloud in the form of group storytelling. The emphasis of RT is on voice, facial expression, gestures, and emotions to help audiences understand the story and make the story back alive (Cook, 2010; Dixon, 2010; & Sloyer, 1982).

The steps of using Readers' Theatre

In implementing the Readers' Theatre strategy, there are some procedures which are proposed by Patrick (2010). They are as follows: 1) The story is introduced: Teacher provides a story. Teacher conducts a pre-reading activity to familiarize students with the story such as creating questions and answering session, introducing vocabulary, and etc. 2) The story is read. 3) The script is written: Teacher provides the script writing in the form scenario. Based on the scenario given from the teacher, the students are required to write a script in a group. 4) The script is practiced: After the script is written by the students, the teacher re-checks the script then students can practice with it. 5) The script is performed: When the students have enough practice with the script, they act it in front of thre class. 6) The performance is reviewed: After all the groups act the script, the teacher re-plays the act by watching the recording. By using peer assesment strategy, the teacher asks the students to comment on their friends' performance.

Methodology

Research design, research site, and participants

Quasi-experimental design using non equivalent pretest-posttest design was used in this study. It involves two groups as the participant of the study called experimental and control groups. Pretest and posttest were administered to these two groups. Readers' Theatre strategy was used to teach the experimental group for 12 meetings, while the control group was not taught by using this strategy.

The eleventh grade students of one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang were inlvoved as the participants of the study. The total number of the students was 114 students who were divided into four classes. I used purposive sampling in choosing the sample of the study. I chose a sample based on some criteria; they had the same numbers of students, had the same English ability, and were taught by the same English teacher. By using these criteria

50 students were selected as the sample of the study which was XI IPA 1 (control group) consisting of 25 students and XI IPA 2 (experimental group) consisting of 25 students. Basically, the groups were chosen based on the students' English scores. The lowest English score achievers were pointed as the experimental group and the highest English score achievers was pointed as the control group.

Data collection and data analysis

The speaking test as the only instrument in this study was administered twice as pre-test and post-test which was used to measure students' speaking achievement before and after the treatments in the experimental group. The students had to perform their ability in speaking by retelling a narrative story in 1-3 minutes. Pretest was given to the students in both group at the first meeting. At the end, posttest was administered to both of the groups. In applying this RT method, the writer held 14 meetings, including 2 meetings for pretest and posttest. Next, the raters were selected in order to analyze the students' speaking scores (pretest-posttest) in both groups. They scored the results of the speaking test by using rubric for oral proficiency categories from Brown (2004). There were five aspects of speaking scoring system; fluency (1-5), pronunciation (1-5), grammar (1-5), vocabulary (1-5), and comprehension (1-5). Then, the score was converted into 0-100. Pre-requisite analysis was done before analyzing the data called normality and homogeneity tests. Normality test was used to measure whether the obtained data were normal or not. Priyatno (2010) states that the data will be normal if the p-output is higher than 0.05. *Kolmogorov Smirnov* in SPSS program was used to check the normality of the data. Meanwhile, to check whether the obtained data were homogeneous or not, homogeneity test was applied. The score is categorized homogenous when the p-output is higher than 0.05 (Priyatno, 2010). *Levene Statistics* in SPSS program was used for this calculation. After the data were found normal and homogeneous, further analyses were conducted. T-test was used to analyze the data. To find out whether or not there was any significant improvement in speaking skill of 44 of the eleventh grade students after they were taught by using Readers' Theatre, Paired sample t-test was used. Next, to find out whether there was any significant difference in speaking skill between the students who were taught by using Readers' Theatre and those who were not, the independent sample t-test was used. To run the analysis, SPSS version 21 for windows was used.

Findings

The pretest and posttest scores distribution analysis in control and experimental groups can be seen from the following Chart 1 and Chart 2.
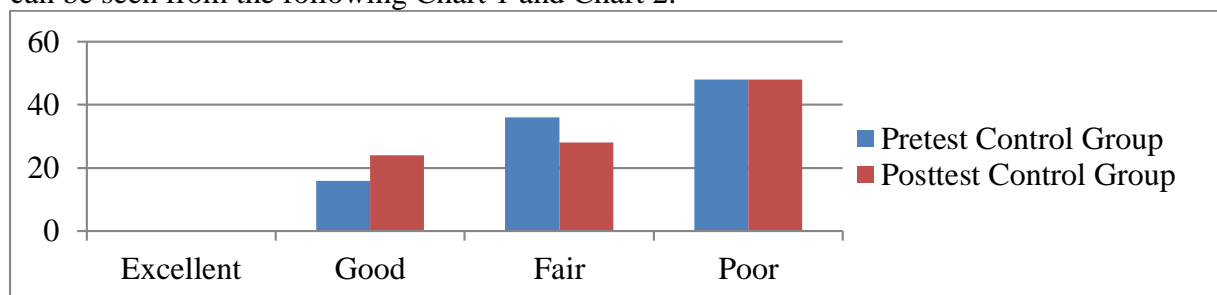

Chart 1. The Speaking Categories Classification in Control Group

The control group pretest scores of 25 students showed that there were 16% of students in good category, 36% of students in fair category, 48% of students in poor category, and no student (0%) in excellent category. In contrast, the students' posttest scores showed that there were 24% of students in good category, 28% of students in fair category, 48% of students in poor category, and no student (0%) in excellent category.
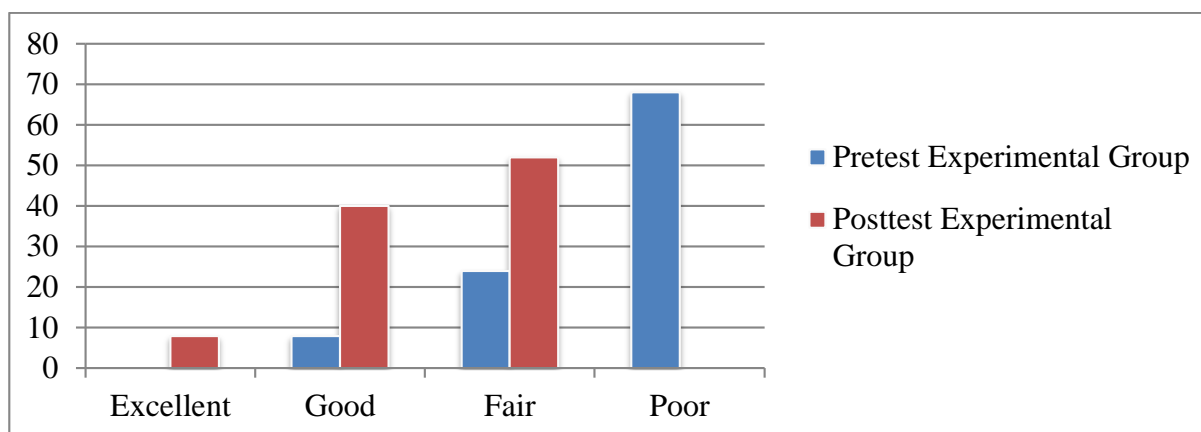

Chart 2. The Speaking Categories Classification in Experimental Group

The experimental group pretest scores of 25 students showed that there were 8% of students in good category, 24% of students in fair category, 68% of students in poor category, and no student (0%) in excellent category. Meanwhile, the students' posttest scores showed that there were 8% of students in excellent category, 40% of students in good category, 52% of students in fair category, and no student (0%) in poor category.

Table 1. The Result of Descriptive Statistics in Both of Groups

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Control	25	20.00	72.00	53.1600	16.07192
Pretest Experimental	25	23.00	73.00	48.8000	14.02379
Posttest Control	25	40.00	77.00	56.3600	12.50960
Posttest Experimental	25	60.00	88.00	69.9200	8.93458

As mentioned earlier, *1 Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov* was used to check the normality of the data. Since all the p-outputs were higher than 0.05, the data were considered normal. The result of the normality test analysis is presented in Table 2 .

Table 2. The Results of Normality Test in Both Groups

Test	Groups	N	Kolmogorov Smirnov	Sig.	Result
Pre test	Control	25	.847	.470	Normal
	Experimental	25	.370	.999	Normal
Post test	Control	25	.690	.727	Normal
	Experimental	25	.945	.333	Normal

Moreover, *Levene statistics* was used to check the homogeneity data. As seen in the following table, all the p-outputs were higher than 0.05. It can be said that all of the data were homogenous. The result of analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Results of Homogeneity Test in both Groups

Variable	Test	Group	N	Levene Statistics	Sig.	Result
Readers' Theatre strategy	Pretest	Experimental	25	0.660	.420	Homogenous
		Control	25			
	Posttest	Experimental	25	1.556	.218	Homogenous
		Control	25			

In this research, to find out the significant improvement on students' speaking skill by using Readers' Theatre strategy of the eleventh grade students of one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang, paired sample t-test was used. Meanwhile, to measure the significant difference on students' speaking skill taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy and those who were not at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang, independent sample t-test was used.

Table 4. The Results of Paired Sample T-Test Analysis in Experimental Group

Using	Paired Sample t-test			
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Ha
Readers' Theatrestrategy at	11.058	24	.000	Accepted
SMA Muhammadiyah 2				
Palembang				

As seen from the result above, the p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 11.058. It means that the students' speaking skill taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy got significant improvement since the p-output was below 0.05 and the t-value was above t-table (df 24 = 2.064). In summary, it can be said that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

Table 5. The Result of independent Sample t-test Analysis in Control and Experimental Groups

Using	Paired Sample t-test			
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Ha
Readers' Theatrestrategy at	4.410	48	.000	Accepted
Islamic Senior High School in				
Palembang				

The result of the independent sample t-test revealed that p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 4.410. In other words, students' speaking skill taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy had significant difference because the p-output was below 0.05 and the t-value was above t-table (df 48= 2.011). It means that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

Discussion

The results of the calculation in the findings confirmed that the students in experimental group gained a significant progress of speaking skill after the treatment by using Readers' Theatre strategy. In can be said that at teaching speaking for senior high school students, the teacher can use this appropriate strategy in order to make the students more excited and attracted in speaking English. According to Harmer (2001), one of teaching speaking activities is acting from a script which is like acting out dialogues or scenes that have been written by themselves. It is in line with the strategy which the researcher applied in this study i.e. Readers' Theatre. Su (2014) states that Readers' Theatre is one of the theatre types which is used as a teaching method. Prescott (2003) also believes that one of dramas or theatres, known as Readers' Theatre, is known to be particularly effective in building oral skills especially fluency. Furthermore, Patrick (2008) reveals that this strategy provides opportunity to the performers to read the script of the story aloud in the form of group storytelling.The steps of applying Readers' Theatre are as follows; (1) a literary text is read at the first and then (2) a drama script is written in order to draw the characters from the script they have read (Patrick, 2010). As we can see from the calculation of paired sample t-test, the p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 11.058. It means that the students' speaking skill taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy got significant improvement since the p-output was below 0.05 and the t-value was above t-table (df 24 = 2.064) especially in XI IPA 2. This result was in line in many previous studies which were conducted by Agustin (2015), Maryani (2015), Endarto (2013), Martha and Ardi (2013). They found that Readers' Theatre strategy significantly affects students' speaking skill. It could be stated that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It means that this strategy was effective in improving students' speaking skill in experimental group.

Second, it was also found that there was a significant difference. The result of the independent sample t-test revealed that p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 4.410. In other words, students' speaking skill taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy had significant difference because the p-output was below 0.05 and the t-value was above t-table (df 48= 2.011). It means that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. In other words, this strategy was effective in improving students' speaking skill in experimental group compared to the control one. Some factors were revelead why Readers' Theatre could improve students' speaking skill and gave significant difference at one Islamic Senior High School inPalembang especially XI IPA 2. First, Readers' Theatre is interesting and fun to facilitate students in practicing oral skills easily. In the first meeting, I focused on explaining about narrative text, then, I explained how to use Readers' Theatre strategy. At the beginning, the students felt unfamiliar with the strategy. They got confused because the strategy was very different from their teacher's strategy. Therefore, the reseacher put more effort in introducing Readers' Theatre strategy to the students. As the treatment was applied, the students began to be interested in the lesson through this strategy. It was fun because this strategy was not boring; the students not only participate in performance, they also can create

scripts (Cook, 2010). After that, they really enjoy theatre activity (Dixon, 2010). They were very enthusiastic being one of a part or character on the theatre whether they were a performer or audience.

Finally, Readers' Theatre could solve vocabulary problems (Martha & Ardi, 2013). It happened because by providing steps such as reading, practicing, and acting on stage, students' vocabulary can be enriched (Maryani, 2015). Besides, the problem of students' such as being shy was solved; it was because the script helps them practicing their English (Patrick, 2010; Prescott, 2003).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Some conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings and discussion above. As shown from the results, this strategy confirmed its effectiveness because it could improve students' score from pretest to posttest on speaking achievement after being taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. The first alternative hyphotesis (Ha) was accepted. The other conclusion is that Readers' Theatre strategy had successfully made significant difference on students' speking achievement after being taught by using Readers' Theatre strategy at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. Finally, the second alternative hyphotesis (Ha) was accepted. This situation could occur because Readers' Theatre is interesting and fun to facilitate students in practicing oral skills easily. The vocabulary problem could be solved through reading, rehearsal, and performing stage and the students' confidence also boosted through Readers' Theatre. Therefore, it can be inferred that Readers' Theatre strategy can be considered as one of the alternative strategies in teaching English speaking.

In addition, I as the researcher would like to give some suggestions for some parties. To the teachers of English especially teacher of English at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang, he/she can use Readers' Theatre strategy as one of alternative strategiesin teaching speaking. It is hoped that this stategy can also improve students' speaking skill. To the students, especially for the eleventh grade students at one Islamic Senior High School in Palembang. It is suggested that they should learn more about speaking since Readers' Theatre strategy can be applied in their teaching and learning classroom easily. Next, to other researchers, it is hoped that this study can be used as one of the sources to conduct studies with similar variables but in the different conditions. It is also advisable that other researchers can focus on the aspects of speaking skill. The weaknesses found in this study can also be used or thought about, so that better research can be done.

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