

Improving students' speaking ability through problem solving strategy at the ninth grade of SMP Negeri 2 Momunu Buol Regency Central Sulawesi Province

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Abstract

This study aims to improve students' speaking skills using Problem Solving Strategy. This study is a classroom action research with the subject is the ninth students of SMP Negeri 2 Momunu Buol Regency, central Sulawesi Province. The study uses observations sheets of teacher and student activity and test to get the data. In this study, for the data analysis, researchers used a speaking assessment rubric consisting of 5 aspects such as comprehension, fluency, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Researchers found that in the first cycle the increase in students' speaking skills that reached the learning completeness criteria of 70 was 11 (44%) students and those who had not reached the learning completeness criteria were 14 (56%) with an average score of 69.44 the highest score reached 80 and the lowest score was 64. Then in the second cycle there was a significant increase where the standard of completeness of learning outcomes, especially in speaking skills, reached 24 (96%) students and students who had not reached the learning completeness criteria were 1 (4%) student. While the average score of students obtained in the second cycle was 81.52 with the highest score reaching 92 and the lowest score 68. Based on this research, the researcher can draw the conclusion that the application of the problem solving strategy learning model is able to increase student activeness in discussion groups therefore students' speaking skills also increase.

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INTRODUCTION

English education in Indonesia has been practiced since. Initially, English classes started at Junior High School. With the 2006 curriculum, many schools began teaching English in primary schools. It was the wisdom of the local government to teach English from elementary school. Education decision-makers in the capital wanted to include English as a regional content subject in primary schools. Later in it developed into a separate region, even a small town. In almost all elementary schools in Indonesia, English was taught from grade 1 to grade 6.

Furthermore, almost all societies believe that English is the most important language to learn. Therefore, many parents want their children to learn English as soon as possible. Most of them believe that learning English in the early will make it easier for children to learn foreign languages. Later, the trend of teaching English in kindergartens and playgroups continued.

In fact, the level of English proficiency of the Indonesian people is only ranked fifth for Southeast Asian countries in 2021, quoted from the Education First (EF) Education Institute. This report involves 112 countries and regions to measure each country's ability .In this case especially on the issue of speaking skills.

Based on some of the ideas above, this is a concern for instructors or English teachers to find solutions in order to improve students' speaking skills in learning English. Various methods and learning media are made in such a way as to achieve these goals. So that in this context teachers are required to be more creative and create a fun learning atmosphere and choose learning strategies that are able to make students active in speaking English in class.

Several strategies such as the problem solving strategy, one of which was used by Apen at the University of Padang in his research entitled The Applicative Use Of Problem Solving Strategy in Teaching Grammar on 39 students were successful with several criteria such as: (1) the process of problem solving techniques makes students challenged, active, think critically and of course improve student learning outcomes, (2) mastery of grammar becomes more varied, (3) improve students' grammar skills, (4) increase student discussion activities.

In this study, the researcher had previously conducted observations at SMP Negeri 2 Momunu and found that students' speaking skills were still low. This is related to the discussion of problem-solving strategies above. Based on some of the explanations above, the researcher is interested in applying the same method to different skills, namely speaking skills, so that this method can be useful for improving speaking skills. therefore the purpose of this study is to improve students' speaking skills through a problem-solving-based learning model.

METHODS

This type of research is classroom action research (CAR). Classroom action research itself is research that aims to improve the quality of practical learning focusing on the learning process in the classroom. In addition, classroom action research is a strategy for finding out problems and solving them.

In this study the researchers used the design Classroom Action Research (CAR) with the Kemmis and MC Taggart model which consists of four stages: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. When planning, the researcher prepares everything necessary for the learning process. The following points make up the planning specification for college students: Analyzing students' speaking problems: Analyzing students' speaking problems, Conduct the cycle in two meetings, Prepare material for oral expression and Prepare data collection tools such as test and observations sheet activities students' and teacher.

Action is a work process, which is the implementation of a plan. At this stage, students will learn how to improve their speaking skills through a problem-based learning approach: Explain the purpose of problem-based learning in English learning, dividing students into 4 groups, giving each group one problem to solve, students in groups solve the problems or problems that have been given, students present the results of their group work

Observations in the learning process of verbal expression and student learning process using observation sheets will be prepared: Assessing students' observation skills, fill in the observation sheet of teacher and student activities during the learning process and Recording the suitability process of the study carried out based on the speaking proficiency indicators.

Reflection is made from the analysis of data from observation and evaluation activities. Reflections were conducted to determine the extent to which the media could improve students' speaking skills and to know the pros and cons of implementing the learning process

was made to avoid repetition. Takes place in the second cycle and overcomes possible obstacles in the second cycle.

The subjects of this research are ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in the 2023/2024 school year. The researcher chose class IX with 25 students consisting of 19 female students and 6 other male students as the research subject with the title "Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Problem Solving Strategy."

In order to get valid data, the researcher conducts or collects related information by carrying out several methods such as observation, and finally researcher tests: The first Observations made by researchers on ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in the 2023/2024 academic year directly during the process during the research process took place, several aspects were seen including: how the teacher distributes material, the teacher's strategy in achieving learning goals, as well as analyzing the responses of students in the learning process. Triangulation technique to obtain data sources that come from teachers, students and the surrounding environment to ensure the validity of the data collected. The second, Tests are considered good for measuring and knowing the extent to which students' abilities and learning skills are and how well students achieve learning goals through the material being taught. The purpose of the test itself is generally to provide feedback.

The observations will be made before and after the class action study used to analyze qualitative data. And to analyze quantitative data, one would have to driving by test there are several steps to get the data.

1. The researcher measured the students' average speaking skill. Score in English by action in a cycle. Know the students' ability English speaking will improve, it would use the formula by Sudjana (2002) as follow:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where: \bar{x} = mean of the student score

$\sum x$ = Total score

N = Total number of student

2. The researcher will try to calculate the percentage of the class that meets the minimum criteria proficiency in English is 70 the formula as follows:

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

N

Where: P = percentage of student score

F = Total students' who got score ≥ 70

N = Number of student

3. The researcher measured the students' speaking skills to see where the success rate of the research was. The percentage of students' speaking skills is calculated by using the formula as follows:

$$P = \frac{A}{B} \times 100$$

Where: P = percentage of student score

A = Gain Score

B = Maximum Score

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Pre- Cycle

Before conducting classroom action research, researchers conducted pre-observation together with English language subject teachers at SMP N.2 Momunu, to find out the problems faced by teachers and students in carrying out English language learning, especially to improve speaking skills. In this cycle researchers found several students who had not reached the 70 standard of completeness that applies in schools.

To see the completeness of the learning outcomes of students' speaking skills can be seen as in the table below

Table 4.1

The Level of Completeness of Pre-Cycle Learning Outcomes				
Range	Category	Pre Cycle		Description
		Frequency	Presentation	
85- 100	High	0		Completed
70- 84	Medium	5	20 %	
50-69	Low	20	80 %	Not Complete
20-49	Very low	0		

Total Score	25	100%
Maximum score		75
Minimum score		60
Average		65,72
Criteria completeness maximum		70

From table 4.1 it can be seen that there are 20 students (80%) who have not reached the learning completeness criteria of 70, and 5 students (20%) who have reached the learning completeness criteria of 70. besides that, based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the lowest student score is 60 and the highest student score only reaches 75.

2. Implementation of Cycle 1

After the application of the problem solving strategy learning model at meetings 1 and 2 of cycle 1 on October 25 2023 at the end of the meeting or after the learning process the researcher conducted an assessment or evaluation of the improvement of the speaking skills of class IX students at SMP N. 2 Momunu, Buol Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. The results of students' speaking skills can be seen in the table below:

Table 4.6
The Analysis Completeness of Speaking Skills Result Students of Class IX SMP N. 2 in 2023/2024 Academic Year of Cycle I

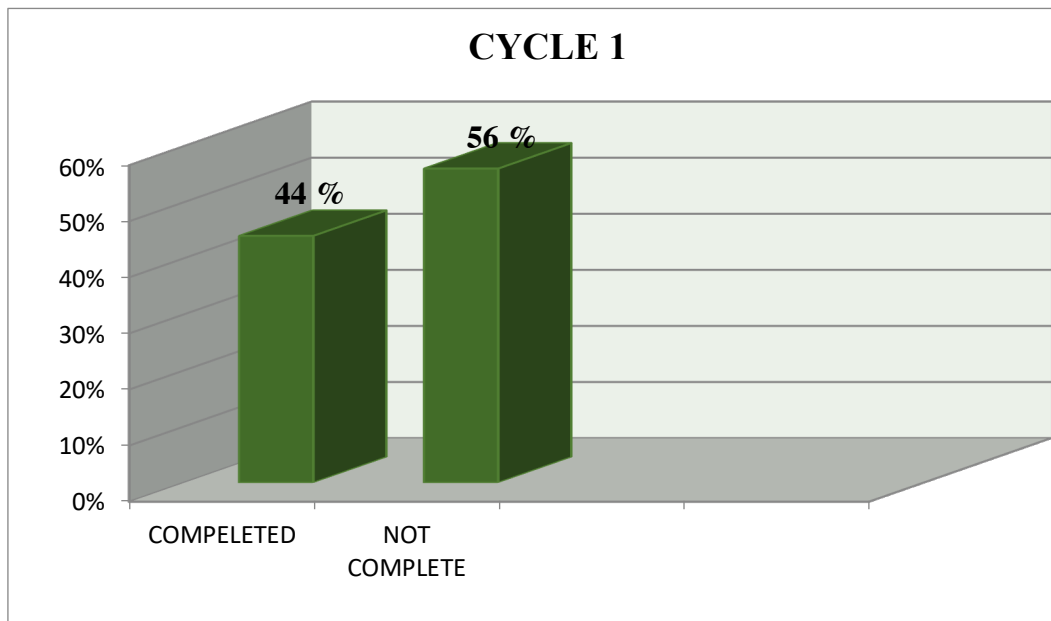
Range	Category	Pre Cycle		Description
		Frequency	Presentation	
85- 100	High			Completed
70- 84	Medium	11	44%	
50-69	Low	14	56 %	Not Complete
20-49	Very low			
Total Score		25	100%	
Maximum score			80	
Minimum score			64	
Average			69,44	
Criteria completeness maximum			70	

Based on table 4.4, the researcher found the results of be teaching completeness in English subjects, especially in speaking skills, where there were 56 % of students who had not reached the learning completeness of 70, and as many as 11 students or 44 % who had reached the completeness standard of 70. Then the average score of students in cycle 1 was 69, 44 and the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 64. In conclusion, cycle 1 has increased by 24 % from the previous stage.

From the explanation of the table above, the presentation of the level of student learning completeness, especially in speaking skills in cycle 1, can be shown in a bar chart as below:

Figure 4.1

Graph of Student Learning Completion Rate / speaking skills Class IX SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in 2023/2024 academic year of Cycle I



Based on the graph of the level of completeness of learning English, especially in the speaking skills of class IX students at SMP Negeri 2 Momunu above, there are 11 students who have achieved learning completeness of more than 70 or 44% while those who have not achieved learning completeness of less than 70 are 14 students or 56%.

3. Implementation of Cycle II

After the application of the problem solving strategy learning model at meetings 1 and 2 of cycle II on October 31, 2023 at the end of the meeting or after the learning process the researcher conducted an assessment or evaluation of the improvement of the speaking skills

of class IX students of SMP N 2 Momunu, Buol Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. The results of students' speaking skills can be seen in the table below:

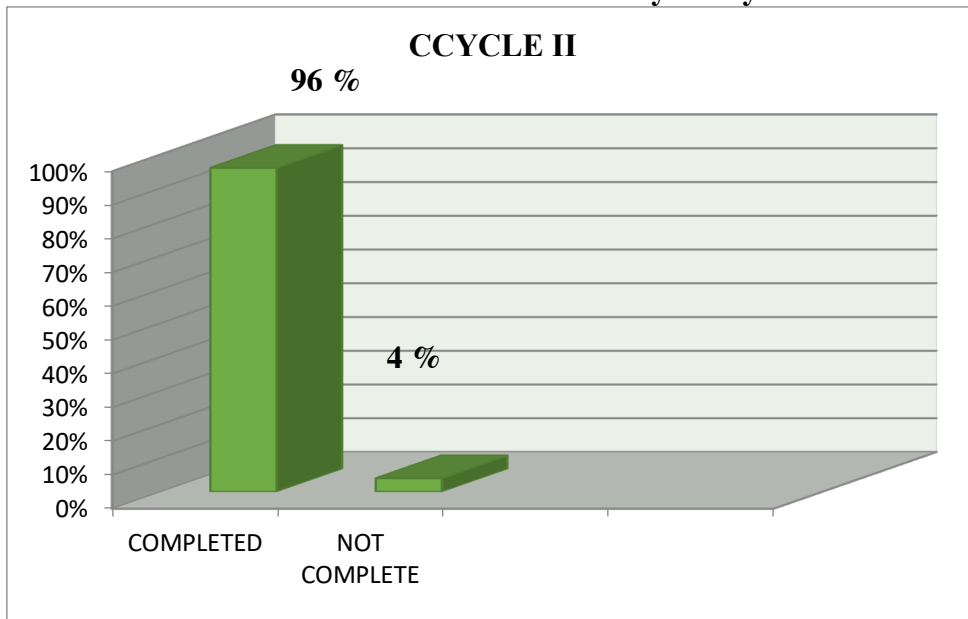
Table 4.11
Completion score of speaking skills of class IX students of SMP Negeri 2 Momunu Buol Regency in the 2023/2024 academic year of Cycle II

Cycle II				
Range	Category	Frequency	Presentation	Description
85- 100	High	4	16 %	Completed
70- 84	Medium	20	80 %	
50-69	Low	1	4 %	
20-49	Very low			Not Complete
Total Score		25	100%	
Maximum score			92	
Minimum score			68	
Average			81,6	
Criteria completeness maximum			70	

Based on table 4.11, the researchers found the results of learning completeness in English subjects, especially in speaking skills, where there 96% of students who had reached a learning completeness of 70, and 1 student or 4% who had not reached the 70 standard of completeness. Then the average score of students in cycle 2 was 81, 6 with the highest score of 92 and the lowest score of 68. In conclusion, cycle 2 has experienced a significant increase in learning completeness, especially in speaking skills by 52% from cycle I, the completeness rate only reached 44%.

From the explanation of the table above, the presentation of the level of student learning completeness, especially in speaking skills in cycle II, can be shown in a bar chart as below:

Figure 4.11
Graph of Student Learning Completion Rate / speaking skills Class IX SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in 2023/2024 academic year Cycle II



Based on the graph of the level of completeness of learning English, especially in the Speaking skills of class IX students at SMP Negeri 2 Momunu above, there are 24 students who have achieved learning completeness of more than 70 or 96 % while those who have not achieved learning completeness of less than 70 are 1 students or 4 %.

Table 4.12
Comparative Analysis of the results Completeness of speaking skills of Students' class IX SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in 2023/2024 academic year (Pre-Cycle, Cycle I and Cycle II)

NO	ACHIEVEMENT	Pre Cycle		Cycle I		Cycle II	
		F	%	f	%	F	%
1.	Completed	5	20 %	11	44	24	96 %
2	Not Complete	20	80 %	14	56 %	1	4 %
Average		65,44		69,44		81,6	
Maximum Score		75		80		92	
Minimum Score		60		64		68	

The research findings, as depicted in table 4.12, show a progressive improvement in student learning outcomes, as evidenced by the increasing percentage of students achieving the designated learning completeness standard across different cycles. Initially, in the pre-cycle condition, the situation was quite challenging. Out of the 25 students in the study, only 5, constituting 20% of the class, were able to reach or surpass the learning completeness standard set at a score of 70. This left a substantial majority of 20 students, amounting to 80% of the class, falling short of the established benchmark, indicating a significant need for intervention to enhance learning outcomes.

After the implementation of targeted actions in cycle I, there was a noticeable improvement in student performance. From the same group of 25 students, 11 (44%) were able to achieve the learning completeness standard of 70, marking a significant increase from the pre-cycle phase. However, 14 students (56%) still remained below the threshold. While this was an improvement, it also highlighted the ongoing challenge of bringing the majority of the class up to the desired standard of learning completeness.

This data underscores the critical importance of adopting effective teaching strategies and interventions to address learning gaps. The initial low percentage of students meeting the learning standard in the pre-cycle stage reflected the need for a more tailored and responsive educational approach. The subsequent improvement in cycle I, although significant, showed that further adjustments and enhancements were needed to ensure that a larger proportion of the class could meet the educational objectives.

The researchers' approach in addressing this issue involved analyzing the factors contributing to the students' underperformance and implementing strategies to mitigate these challenges. This could have included adopting more interactive and engaging teaching methods, providing additional support and resources to students who were struggling, and creating an environment that fosters a deeper understanding and retention of the material. Additionally, the educators might have incorporated feedback mechanisms to continuously assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and make necessary adjustments.

The results from cycle I provided valuable insights for further refining the teaching strategies for cycle II. The goal was to build on the progress made and extend the reach of the interventions to ensure that an even greater number of students could achieve the learning

completeness standard. The data from cycle I served as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and guide future instructional decisions.

Overall, the findings from this research highlight the dynamic nature of the learning process and the need for educators to be adaptable and responsive to the varying needs of their students. By closely monitoring student performance and being willing to adjust teaching strategies accordingly, educators can significantly enhance learning outcomes and help more students reach their academic potential.

Discussion

Based on classroom action research (CAR) conducted by researchers at SMP N. 2 Momunu, Buol Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, where in this research the researchers used the Problem Solving Strategy learning model to improve students' speaking skills. Researchers divided each cycle into two meetings. In this study, researchers succeeded in improving English learning outcomes, especially in speaking skills in the material Expressing Congratulations, Hopes and Wishes. At each meeting the researcher applied the problem-solving strategy learning model, namely presenting assignments with group discussions to solve problems given by the teacher on the worksheet, then ending with a presentation assignment in pairs to present the results of the discussion. In this research, the problem solving strategy learning model also has the advantage that apart from being able to improve students' speaking skills, which is the main goal of the researcher, problem solving is also able to increase students' independence and increase student participation in making contributions. Thinking because they are free to express themselves in solving problems or tasks given. The process of finding solutions can train students' speed of thinking in solving each given problem.

Based on the results of research in cycle II, researchers found that the level of learning completion reached $96\% \geq 80\%$ of the specified success indicators. Thus, classroom action research using problem solving strategy models to improve students' speaking skills has proven successful. The increase in English learning outcomes, especially in speaking skills, is caused by the problem-solving strategy learning model which can involve students actively in learning and is more focused on students, students work in groups to discuss problems raised by the teacher which can effectively improve students' communication and language skills. This learning model is also able to help students feel more comfortable and reduce stress

when receiving assignments because they are done together. After that, students also learn to dare to present the results of their assignments in front of the class.

This research conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Momunu in Buol Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, during the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, provides compelling evidence that the application of a problem-solving strategy learning model significantly enhances English learning outcomes, particularly in speaking skills, for Class IX students. The effectiveness of this approach is primarily attributed to the increased student activeness in the problem-solving process during discussion activities, which fosters effective communication. This aligns with Gardner's (2007) assertion that problem-based learning is an appealing and alternative educational model in classroom settings.

The problem-based learning model, as described by Vidergor & Krupnik-Gottlieb (2015), involves presenting students with real-world problems, thereby prompting them to become more active in learning to identify and solve these issues. This approach not only improves their problem-solving skills but also enhances their engagement and motivation in learning. In this specific study, students were grouped and tasked with collaboratively identifying and resolving various problems. This method of learning is distinct from traditional lecture-based approaches, as it places students in the driver's seat of their educational journey, making them active participants rather than passive recipients of information.

One of the unique aspects of this study is the method of presentation employed by the students. After working in groups to solve each problem, students were then instructed to present their solutions in pairs. This format not only encouraged cooperation and teamwork within the groups but also allowed students to practice their speaking skills in a supportive and collaborative environment. The paired presentations provided an opportunity for students to articulate their thoughts and reasoning clearly and confidently, thereby further enhancing their communication skills.

Another significant advantage of this study is the inclusion of a student learning observation sheet. This tool was instrumental in tracking the progress of students across each cycle of the study. It provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the teaching strategies and student engagement levels, allowing for adjustments and improvements to be made in real time. The observation sheet revealed consistent advancements in student

performance and engagement throughout the study, indicating the effectiveness of the problem-solving strategy learning model.

Moreover, the introduction of this new learning style was not only beneficial for the students but also for the teachers. It offered an opportunity for educators to explore and adapt to innovative teaching methods, moving away from conventional rote learning techniques. This shift in teaching approach required educators to take on more of a facilitative role, guiding students through the problem-solving process and encouraging independent thinking and analysis.

The success of this study in improving English speaking skills through problem-solving strategies highlights the potential of this approach in other subject areas and educational settings. It underscores the importance of active learning strategies that engage students in practical problem-solving activities, which can lead to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge. This research contributes valuable insights to the field of education, demonstrating that when students are actively engaged in the learning process through real-world problem-solving, their academic outcomes, particularly in language skills, can be significantly enhanced.

CONCLUSION

The study initially observed that in the first cycle of the experiment, a significant number of students struggled with speaking skills, as evidenced by only 11 students (44%) achieving the minimum proficiency score of 70. In contrast, 14 students (56%) were unable to meet this standard, with an overall average score of 69.44 and individual scores varying between 64 and 80. However, the second cycle of the study marked a substantial improvement in student performance. In this phase, an impressive 96% of the students, amounting to 24 individuals, successfully reached or exceeded the learning outcome standards set for speaking skills. Only one student, representing 4% of the group, did not achieve the desired criteria. The average score witnessed a significant jump to 81.52, with the highest score soaring to 92 and the lowest climbing to 68.

This marked improvement can be attributed to the implementation of a problem-solving strategy within the learning model. The strategy involved encouraging active participation in group discussions, which provided students with a practical and engaging platform to practice and enhance their speaking skills. The interactive nature of problem-

solving discussions allowed students to not only apply theoretical knowledge but also to develop critical thinking and communication skills in a collaborative environment. This approach proved to be highly effective in boosting student confidence and competence in speaking, as reflected in the improved scores.

The research conclusively demonstrates the positive impact of integrating problem-solving strategies in educational settings, particularly in the development of speaking skills. It highlights the importance of active learning methodologies that engage students in practical, real-world problem-solving scenarios, fostering not just academic proficiency but also essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. This study serves as a valuable reference for educators and curriculum designers seeking to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in language and communication education.

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