

# TEACHING SPEAKING TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH FOUR CORNERS GAME

**Ayu Rahayu<sup>1</sup>, Jufri<sup>2</sup>**  
**English Department**  
**Faculty of Languages and Arts**  
**State University of Padang**

Email: ay\_rha89@rocketmail.com

## **Abstrak**

This article discusses about a technique in teaching English, that is, expressing student's idea and opinion in English. The technique is Four Corners game. The goal is to train the students to speak English by discussing and expressing their opinion. The way is students divided into four groups that is stood in each corners of the class and ask them to discuss the topic that is given, also express their opinion in front of the class. This technique is considered to give some benefits for English teacher. And for the students, it can be interesting to gain students' ability in learning English.

Key words: speaking, Four corners game

## **A. Introduction**

Indonesian government now has applies curriculum 2006 which is well known as CBC (Competency Based Curriculum) in teaching English at Junior High School. In this curriculum, for English subject, it is targeted that Junior High School students will able to communicate in English both spoken and written form correctly. In spoken form, the students express their ideas and pronounce the words orally and in board in order to check their understanding.

In Curriculum 2006, it is said that focus on teaching speaking is to improve students' oral production in interpersonal speaking and transactional. Unfortunately, speaking in English is still considered by many students as a difficult skill because they have to master other language elements, such as, vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation. We can see in almost every school that the number of students who can speak English is still small, even though the

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<sup>1</sup> Student of English Language Teaching Program of FBS UNP graduated on March 2013

<sup>2</sup> Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

students have learned English for a long time. Some of them have studied since they were at Elementary school and even from play group or in Kindergarden.

The main reason causing students' difficulties to express their orally was lack of motivation. Almost students were lack of motivation in English because the classroom atmosphere was not supported them to learn. In other word, the class did not stimulate and motivate students to face the lesson from teachers. As a result, they sleepy and less attention to the lesson. So, the students are not interested in learning. It is necessary for the teachers to create a suitable atmosphere. The teacher have to make the students happy and think that English is easy, enjoyable, and not frightening subject. That would allow students to express themselves freely and make them feel eager to communicate in foreign language.

Second, students did not have self confidence to speak English because they felt ashamed or afraid to make mistakes. In addition, students had lack of vocabulary. So, they did not know what to say or how to say words in English and did not know much about the topic being discussed. However, in studying, the desire to practice without feeling afraid to make mistake must be increased. Mistakes can be corrected and students can learn from their mistakes so that they can increase their English ability much better, like English say "practice make perfect".

The third problem was lack of practice. Many students lack of practice English in the field. They did not practice their English a lot because they afraid to try speaking and some of them lazy to practice it. Actually, the other people understand that students were just learning when they tried speaking their language. No one will laugh at them. So, if the students were to be successful, they need to practice English as much as possible.

The problem is also come from teacher side. The teacher at school could not choose the suitable material to motivate their students. As a result, the students were not interested in learning English and may regard learning English as a lesson that should be taken. Actually, the teacher needs to use English language during teaching language process in order to students can acquiring speaking skill from the process.

According to Widowson (1984) speaking is the active production skill and use oral production. It is capability of someone to communicate orally with others. The one who has skills in speaking can be identified from his/her ability in using the oral language fluently, clearly, and attractively. It is also supported by Harmer (2002) who states that the ability to speak fluently supposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process and language spot. It means that a learner is judged having good speaking ability of she/he can speak fluently, can be understood by other people, understand the conveyed information and mastered all the language components that include pronunciation, listening and grammar skills.

In the light of the speaking terms above, it can be concluded that speaking is someone's activity in expressing his/her ideas in the spoken language. It is

natural means of communication to express human being through as well as from social behavior, emotions, and feelings. Furthermore, speaking is an ability to interact or do dialogue with others, to understand what someone says and to create utterances that can be understood. It is not only talking but also the speaker needs special attention from others because she/he must know how to use language in the social context. If she/he does not know the language used, the information will not be received.

Government has design the process of teaching and learning activity for junior high school. It is covered by *Peraturan Materi Pendidikan Nasional No. 41 Tahun 2007 Tentang Standar Proses Untuk Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah*. The process itself is specified in three steps; Pre-teaching, Whilst-teaching, and Post-teaching. The explanation is as the following:

1. Pre-teaching

This activity has a purpose that is to build student's knowledge about lesson that they will learn, increase student's motivation and focus their attention so that they can participate actively during the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the teacher tries to explore the student's background of knowledge, the teacher can discuss or give some questions which are related to the topic. The teacher also explains to the students about the basic competencies that they should acquire in learning process. Besides, in pre-teaching, Hammond et al (1992:17) tells that teacher also can tell the students the experience that they have about the topic later.

2. Whilst-teaching

Whilst-teaching is a learning purposed to accomplishe the basic competencies. The learning process is done by interacting, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging, motivating students to actively participate, and giving enough space for idea, creativity enough space idea, creativity, and independency based on their talent and psychological development. This activity aims to develop communicative purpose between teacher and students. The teacher gives a conversation about the topic and students try to analyze and understand it by answering some question that is given by their teacher. After that, Hammond et al (1992:17) says that teacher tells the students sbout the appropriate expression and how to say it correctly based on the proper situation both in formal and informal one. Teachers make sure that all of the students understand about the lesson.

In this stage, the method used is based on the students' characteristic and the subject that is being taught. It consists of exploration process, elaboration process, and confirmation process.

- a. Exploration

In this activity, the teacher:

- 1) Involves the students to find a large amount of information related to the topic of their learning material.
- 2) Uses various learning approaches, learning media, and other sources.
- 3) Facilitates the interaction among the students, between the students and the teacher, the students and the environment, and other learning sources.

- b. Elaboration

In this activity, the teacher:

- 1) Makes the students get used to various reading and writing activities by giving certain meaningful tasks.
- 2) Facilitates students by giving some assignments, discussion, and other activities which are purposed to emerge new ideas, both oral and written.
- 3) Provides the students with the opportunity to think, analyze, solve any problems, and act without fear.
- 4) Facilitates the students in cooperative and collaborative learning.
- 5) Facilitates the students to create a fair competition in order to improve learning achievement.
- 6) Facilitates the students to write exploration report both oral and written, both individual and groups.
- 7) Facilitates the students to arrange a show, tournament, festival, and the product that they have produced.

c. Confirmation

In this activity, the teacher:

- 1) Provides a positive feedback and emphasizing through oral, written, sign, or even gifts to students' achievements.
- 2) Gives confirmation toward the result of students' exploration and elaboration from various sources.
- 3) Facilitates students to do a reflection in order to gain learning experience which they have done.
- 4) Facilitates the students to gain the meaningful experience in order to attain basic competencies.
  - a. The teacher has to be a resources and facilitator in order to answer the students' question, by using polite and formal language.
  - b. The teacher solves the problem.
  - c. The teacher provides the students with a reference to check their exploration.
  - d. The teacher gives information for further exploration.
  - e. The teacher gives motivation for those who do not participate or not enough participation.

3. Post-teaching

Post-teaching is an activity purposed to end the teaching and learning activity. It includes the activities that aim to develop students' knowledge and comprehension about the lesson. The teacher asks the students to make a dialogue or conversation in pairs or in a group based on the topic and the appropriate expression that they have got from their teacher. Here, the teacher can give the feedback about their works and tell them not to forget mixing the correct pronunciation, the contents, and also the fluency of their students when they practice. At the last of activity, Hammond et al (1992:17) tells that teacher asks the students to practice it at home and gives them homework by making a new conversation based on the lesson at that home.

Moreover, feedback from the teacher is very important on the progression of students' speaking competence. In learning especially in speaking, the students must get the understanding and the comprehension about what they are learning and doing in the classroom. There are some strategies that promote students' understanding in learning speaking, for example, summarizing, note taking, reinforcing effort, and doing homework and practice.

Game as a technique in language teaching that can be a central of language teaching and can add more fun to the class. Games may also be used to make the English lesson interesting. As Santrock (1994) said that games are activities involve for fun that include match with someone or somebody. The game can give stimulation and entertainment to the learners.

Game not only make children fun or just get a pleasure, but also it can be a technique in teaching English in the classroom. As Linse (2005) explained that a suitable teaching technique in young learners classroom. As a teacher, we should know how to catch the attention from the students and make them like to learning English. If the teacher can catch the student's attention, they will enthusiasm in studying the lesson.

Game give many advantages in teaching and learning process. Smaldino et al (2008:30) say there are some advantages of playing game in teaching and learning process. First, games are engaging. Students are quickly engaged in learning through game. Second, games match to outcomes. Games can be simplified to match learning outcomes. The third advantage is variety of setting. Games can be used in a variety of classroom setting, from whole class to individual activities. The last advantage of game is gaining attention. Games can be an effective way to gain students attention to learn a specific topic or skill.

The four corners game is a cooperative teaching and learning strategy that inspires students to take part in group activities. It is most suitably used when students are lethargic and need some meaningful physical movement in order to refocus (Walqui 2007). This teaching strategy helps to develop listening, speaking, critical thinking, and decision-making skills in the classroom context. It can be used to buttress course content, clarify student viewpoints, and develop an understanding of differences in values and opinions. Not only does it stimulate students to take part in activities by making decisions, it also encourages them to cognitively justify their decisions (Muskingum 2010).

There are a variety of ways to engage students after they are in their respective corners. The teacher can randomly call on students in each corner to share why they chose the given position. Otherwise, each corner's group can discuss the statement and develop a collective response to be shared. Alternatively, the teacher can assign different groups to debate each other. For example, agree and disagree students can debate while the strongly agree and strongly disagree students do the same. Another option is to have each group research their position and present a persuasive speech to the rest of the class supporting their position.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Four Corners game can be used to enhance students' speaking. By using Four Corners game, it gives chance for students to discuss and speak the topic that is given by teacher. This

method is very useful to be applied in the class because the students still lack of practice speaking.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. The Procedure of Teaching Speaking to Elementary School through Four Corners Games Students**

In teaching speaking, the teacher must have preparation before start the lesson. The teacher can do some steps to have it. First, the teacher makes the lesson plan (RPP). It have a purpose as a guide in teaching process. The teacher should select the topic tha appropriate wih the curriculum and syllabus. So, the teacher should consider a good preparatio to make teaching speaking success.

Teaching procedures in teaching speaking through four corners consists of some steps. Learning procedures in the class include opening the acivity or gree t the students and open the lesson.

Topic: all students should wear uniforms to school.

#### **a. Pre-Teaching Activiy**

Pre teaching is the first activity in teaching and learning process. The teacher prepares the class and media about the topic that will be given. The teacher starts the lesson by greeting the students and makes some daily conversations. Then, the teacher and students pray in order to make the teaching and learning process run well. The teacher checks students attendance and their readiness to study.

#### **b. Whilst-Teaching Activity**

Whilst teaching is the core of teaching and learning process because in this part the teacher does some steps to explain the topic which may include exploration stage, elaboration stage, and confirmation stage.

At this step, teacher present a dialogue, and ask the students to read and practice the dilaogue. The teacher may point a student to read a sentence to check her or his pronunciation and it can be continued to other students. Then the teacher asks some questions to the students.

Next, the teacher gives a statement and write down it on the whiteboard. The students are devided into four groups. Each group has different labels like agree, disagree, strongly agree, and strongly disagree. then, each group move to the each corners of the class. Teacher will give 5 or more minutes to the students to discuss the topic with the group based on the label.

At the end of the discussion period, all group will present and share with the class some ideas and opinion they discussed in their group. The game can continue by selecting a new statement or the same sttement can be used again to see what impact on opinion.

c. Post-Teaching Activity

It is last step in teaching speaking. In this step the teacher review the lesson to the students. The next is the teacher concludes the lesson, such as the topic of the lesson that the students learned. The last way is the teacher closes the lesson and the class.

### **C. Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the previous explanation and theory related, it is clear that Four Corners game can be applied in helping students' speaking. It is one of fun and active way that can be used in order to make students actively involve and participate more in the classroom.

By using Four Corners game, teacher can apply new technique in teaching speaking. Four Corners game can overcome the problems that make teaching speaking neglecting such as difficulty in finding fun and active way in teaching English and the use of traditional technique in the classroom that will make students bored.

It is suggested to English teacher to use Four Corners game in teaching speaking for improving student's speaking skill. Through this game, teacher can create an interesting and enjoyable way in getting students actively involved in teaching and learning process. Also, teachers have to consider the use of time when applying Four Corners game in classroom. This game needs a good time management; it should be well prepared before the lesson time. Teacher do not need to prepare the materials, and also the media. Then, teacher should think about how they can get the materials for the students. For the suggestions, teacher may find the materials such as the topic from the internet or they may find them from the magazines.

**Note: this article is writte based on the writer's paper with advisor Drs. Jufri, M.Pd.**

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