

# **Implementation of Allo-Repitition Strategy to Improve Learners' Participation in Speaking Activities at Speaking II Course of English Department STAIN Kerinci**

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## *Abstract*

This study focused on implementation of allo-repition strategy to improve learners' participation in speaking activities. It was a classroom action research (CAR) which conducted in two cycles at speaking II course of English department STAIN Kerinci wherein in this study, the writer only conducted at one class of three consisted of 33 learners. The data were collected by using speaking test, observation, questionnaires and interview. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to know the process learning and result of implementing allo-repition strategy. The results of data analysis from observations show the improvement of learners' involvement in learning process. The data from learners' speaking activities show the improvements in terms of numbers of exchanges the learners could produce in a conversation, learners' turn-taking, and learners' back-channeling. The data from questionnaires and interview show the improvement of learners' perception toward learning speaking by using Allo-Repetition strategy and the technique of lecturer in teaching. The result of this study indicates that it better improves learners' participation in speaking activities.

**Keywords:** *Allo-Repitition Strategy, Learners' Participation, Speaking.*

## **Introduction**

It is said that success in learning a foreign language is determined by it's learners' abilities to communicate effectively in the language. To make the language learners able to communicate in both spoken and written language, they should acquire all language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, they also should have competences on language components such as: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. It can be said that the aim of language teaching can be obtained if the learners are able to express their ideas and thoughts as well as to perform communication well through acquiring those skills and components. Since the focus of language teaching has changed towards communicative skills, the teaching of oral skill has become increasingly important.

Related to this case, it is essential that language lecturers pay more attention on teaching speaking with an emphasis on the teaching the language use in real life situations and contextual communication. That is why it is important for lecturers to provide a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place. In other words, language activities in the classroom should give learners more opportunities to speak in order to improve individual language use.

Dealing with this condition, learners are expected to be able to communicate in oral or written language whether in interactional or transactional communication. The learners are hoped to be competent to perform their speaking abilities through monolog and dialogue in the context of daily life. To meet this demand, the researcher thinks that learners' strategic competence is one of the required competences in order to improve their participation in speaking activities or conversation.

In addition, Tannen (1989: 1) states that ordinary conversation is made up of linguistic strategies which are pervasive, spontaneous, and functional. She calls these strategies as 'involvement strategies' because they reflect and simultaneously create interpersonal

involvement (1989:1). So, involvement in a conversation is not merely a matter of understanding the meaning but also participation in the interaction. For this idea, allo-repetition strategy is one of involvement strategies in conversation. Here, the participants of conversation can apply this strategy to show their participation in conversation. Related to the idea that conversation is the process of negotiating of meaning, Coughlin (2006: 6) states that to participate in conversation requires the speaker to generate speech that is acceptable in both content and form.

In another case, it also seems that a great number of classroom speaking activities are based on memorizing new vocabulary, practicing grammar rules, and analyzing texts. Little attention is given to communication skills such as listening and speaking. The speaking ability is mostly taught to the learners by memorizing dialogues, and then performs them in front of the classroom. This condition generates learners to be the passive learners since they are not trained to convey their ideas and express their mind in spontaneous talk. As a result, some learners might find it difficult to be involved in conversation especially for daily social communication.

Considering this fact, it requires lecturers to consider methodology and learners strategies in learning which is not only intended to produce learners who can master language, but also to produce school graduates with skills that can be applied in their daily life as well as in an academic field. Since oral communication skill has been considered as a vital part of humanistic education and democratic citizenship, it is an obligatory to teach learners not only to be able to speak accurately and fluently, but also to be able to establish relationships through conversation in their social life. The learners' participation in conversation can be improved through employing certain communication strategies.

There is a wide range of communication strategies which can be employed based on the learners' knowledge of the language; for example, beginners can only employed limited CS because of their restricted knowledge of language. The most effective strategies would therefore appear to be those that allow beginners to initiate and maintain conversation. Considering the language ability of the participants of this research, the researcher will teach them how to maintain and develop conversation through one of the CS namely allo-repetition strategy.

In this case, communication strategies can be employed in conversation in order to allow the learners to maintain in conversation. So, learners get more opportunities to hear as well as to produce the target language. Tarone, Fearch and Kasper in Brett (2001: 54) propose that in order to remain in the conversation learners must: (1) find way to continue producing the target language despite the limitation, (2) recognize when their production has not been properly interpreted, and (3) indicate their reception of the speakers' intentions.

Forms of repetition and variation in conversation can be identified according to several criteria. First, one may distinguish self-repetition and allo-repetition (repetition of others). Second instance of repetition may be placed along a scale of fixity in form, ranging from exact repetition to paraphrase (Tannen 1989: 54). Repetition with variation, such as questions transformed into statements, statements change into questions, repetition with single word or phrase changed, and repetition with change of person or tense. The repetition of patterned rhythm is also included in which completely different words are uttered in the same syntactic and rhythmic paradigm as a preceding utterance. There is also a temporal scale ranging from immediate to delayed repetition.

Repetition of words, phrases, and clauses in conversation serves many functions. Tannen (1989: 59) states the functions of allo-repetition as indications of: *participatory listenership, ratifying listenership, stalling, participating, surprise, and humor*.

Dealing with this study, the writer wants to know to what extend the allo-repetition strategy can better improve learners' participation in speaking activities at speaking II course of English Department STAIN Kerinci. The writer believes that allo-repetition strategy is very helpful to develop learners' participation in speaking activities.

## Method

Since the writer wanted to do an attempt in order to gain improvement or changing on her own teaching learning process, this research is appropriate to be called as a classroom action research. Hopkins (1993: 9) says that action research is a research in which lecturers look critically at their own classrooms primary for the purpose of improving their teaching and the quality of education in their school. The action research that was employed in this study was the cyclical process in which there were four stages known as planning, doing action, observing and reflecting or evaluating. It conducted 2 cycles.

In this study, the writer used five instruments to gather the data. They are; observation sheets, field note, tape recorder, questionnaires, and interview guideline. They are;

1. Observation sheets were prepared before conducting the research. There were two kinds of observation sheets; for lecturer's activities and for learners' activities. It was used to record and collect the real information of teaching learning process during conducting the research.
2. Field notes were used to record particular happenings during the action, the researcher used research field note as another form beside the observation sheets.
3. Tape recorder was used to record the learners' conversation at the last meeting of every cycle.
4. Questionnaires were used to gain feedback from learners concerning the strategy instruction. The researcher set a form of questionnaires consisted of 20 questions. Fourteen questions related to the learners' perception toward learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy and six questions related to their perception of how the lecturer teaches. The types of questions provided in the questionnaires were closed questions. In completing the questionnaires, each student should choose one of the options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree).
5. Interview guideline was used to lead the researcher in conducting the interview at the end of the second cycle to get deep information from learners. They were asked individually about their experiences and comments on teaching learning process and how the treatment given made improvement on them.

## Discussion

### 1. The Finding of data

The improvement of learners' participation in conversation after introducing to allo-repetition strategy is discussed based on the improvement of the following categories; learners' involvement in learning process, learners' numbers of exchanges in a conversation, learners' turn-taking, and learners' back-channeling. And learners' perception toward the strategy instruction is discussed under the categories of learners' perception toward learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy and learners' perception of how the lecturer teaches. The result of data analysis in the first cycle was compared to the result of data analysis in the second cycle. Here, the comparison focused the categories which have the quantitative data.

#### *a. Learners' numbers of exchanges in a conversation*

Since the learners' participation improvement in conversation was determined by the number of exchanges they could produce in a conversation, figure 4.6 show the differences between the numbers of their conversation exchanges in the first and the second cycle.

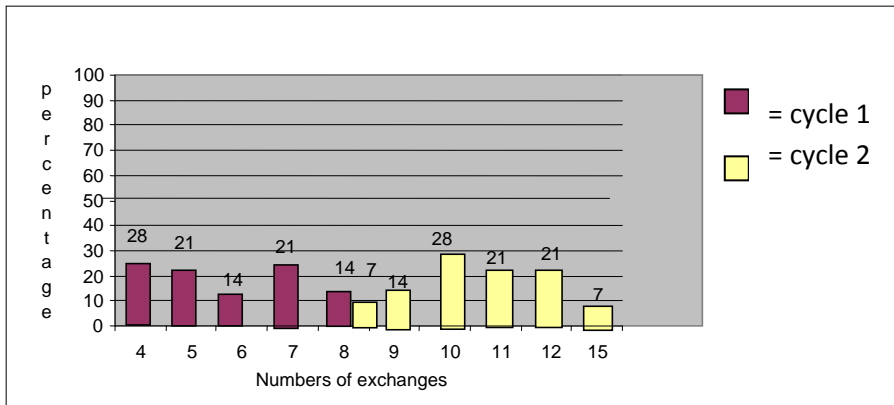


Figure 1: The Histogram of Number of Exchanges

From the graph, it can be described that learners could increase the numbers of exchanges they could utter in a conversation from the first cycle to the second cycle.

The comparison of numbers of exchanges between the two cycles is displayed in figure 4.6. In average, the learners were able to converse more than 5 exchanges in the first cycle, while in the second cycle they were able to converse more than 10 exchanges.

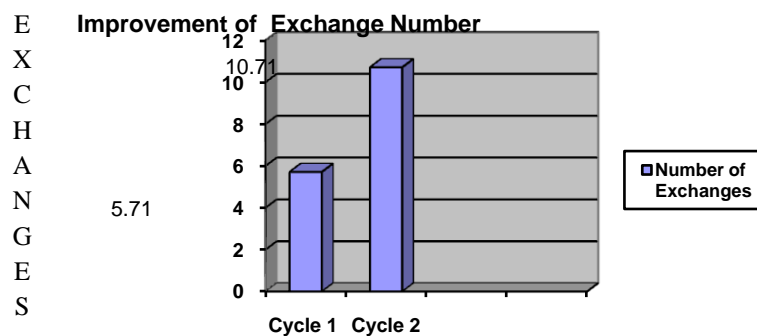


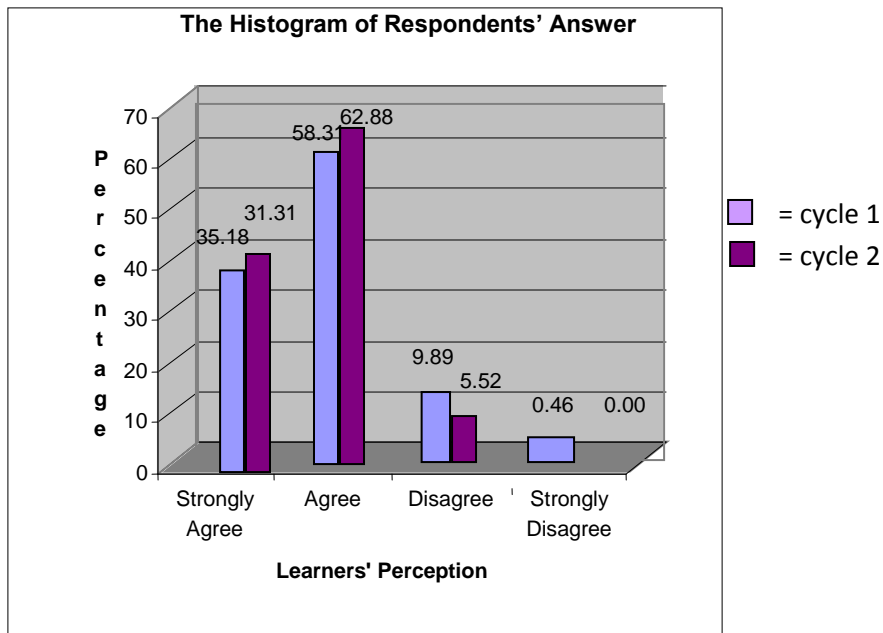
Figure 2: The Histogram of Exchange Number Improvement

*b. Learners' Perception toward the Strategy Instruction*

The improvement of learners' perception toward the strategy instruction can be seen from their perception toward learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy and their perception of how the lecturer teaches.

1) Learners perception toward learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy

The percentage of learners who strongly agreed and agreed to the statement about the strengths of the strategy increased, while the percentage of the learners who disagreed and strongly disagreed decreased. None of the learners was strongly disagreed to the item in the questionnaires of the second cycle. So, the learners' perception toward learning allo-repetition strategy improved. The following figure describes the comparison of learners' answers for each option.



In another case, the score for each indicator tended to increase in general. Few indicators remain in the same score and even decreased. But all of the indicators categorized into 'positive' level of perception. The comparison of learners' responses to each item can be seen in the following histogram.

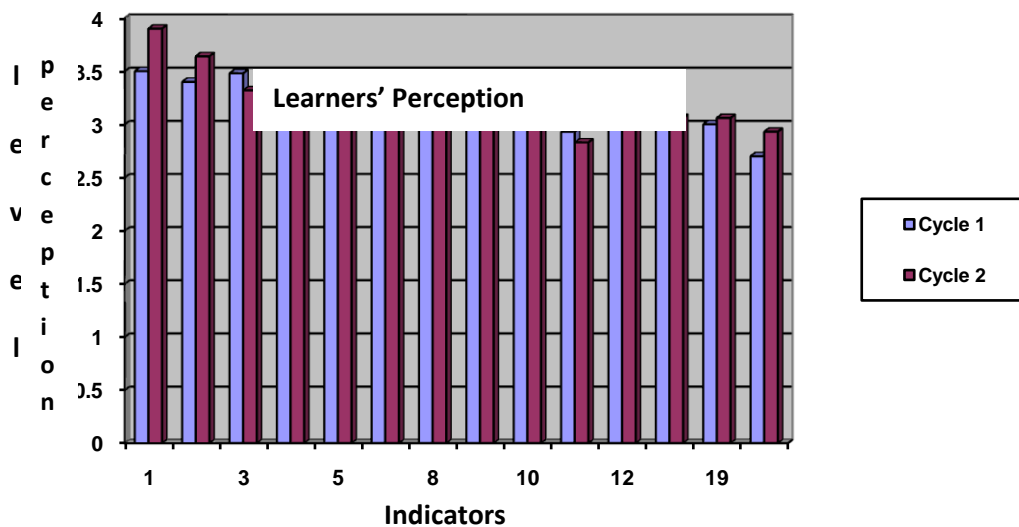


Figure 4: The Comparison of Learners' Perception to Each Indicator

After analyzing the result of observation, questionnaires, and interview from the first and the second cycle, it was proved that allo-repetition strategy improved learners' conversation skill. Learners thought they got benefits by learning the strategy and they hoped that lecturer would teach them another communication strategy.

## 2) Learners' Perception of How the Lecturer Teaches

The improvement of learners' perception of how the lecturer teaches can be seen from figure 4.8. The percentage of learners who strongly agreed and agreed to the statement about the

way the lecturer teaches increased, while the percentage of the learners who disagreed and strongly disagreed decreased from the first to the second cycle.

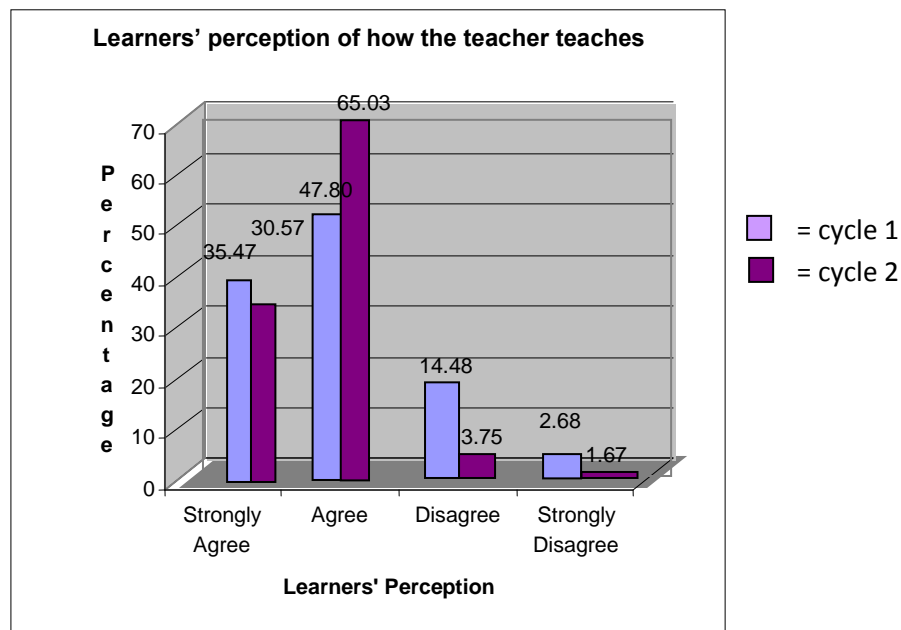


Figure 5: The Histogram of Respondents' Answer

In the second cycle, nearly all of the learners strongly agreed and agreed to the way the lecturer teaches and only few learners strongly disagree and disagree to the statement related to the way the lecturer teaches. So, it can be said that the learners' perception of how the lecturer teaches improved.

In more detail, the improvement learners' perception of each indicator from cycle 1 and cycle 2 can be seen in the following figure.

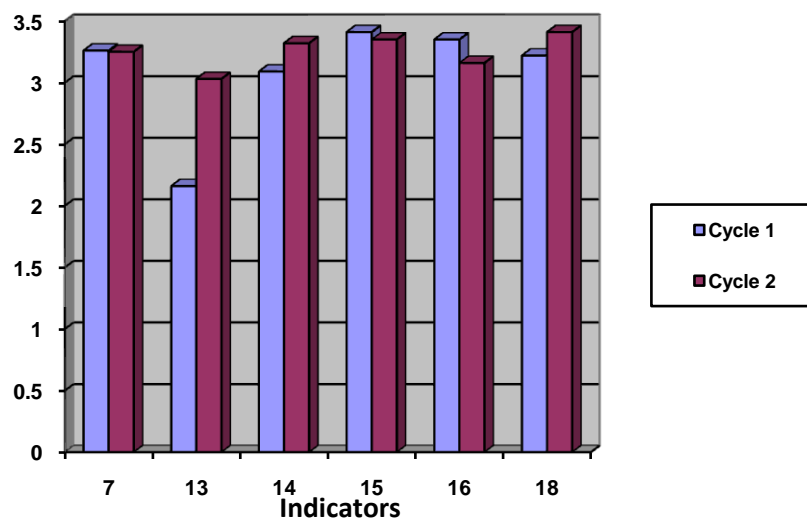


Figure 4.10: The Comparison of Learners' Perception to Each Indicator

From the figure above, it can be seen that learners' perception of each indicator from cycle 1 to cycle 2 is not different though there were little changes of the average score of each categories. The category of their perception of each indicator is 'positive'.

## 2. The Analysis of Data

The extent to which allo-repetition strategy could improve the learners' participation in conversation is depicted by the result of the analysis of data collected through the observation and tape recording. The improvement of learners' involvement in learning process was analyzed from the data gained through observation sheets and field-notes. The analysis of observation sheet and field-notes as stated in the finding concluded that learners was getting more involved in learning process, and had been able to show their positive attitude toward learning this strategy. Related to this condition, Brown (2001) argues that an analysis which identifies the requirements of the learners involved is a necessary first step in teaching speaking.

The data from tape recording also show the improvement on learners' participation in conversation in terms of the number of exchanges they could produce in a conversation. That is why, before analyzing the conversation, it was important to determine what element of conversation structure to be observed. Here, the researcher focused on the numbers of exchanges they can produce because 'an exchange is the basic unit of interaction' (Sinclair, 1975). So, the more the exchanges the better the conversation is. The result show that the numbers of exchanges in a learners' conversation in the first cycle and the second cycle increased in average. Learners could interact in more exchanges in the second cycle. It means that allo-repetition strategy improved learners' conversation skill in terms of the number of exchanges they could produce.

The improvement of learners' turn-taking is also an indication of good participation in conversation. If the participants of a conversation cannot manage their turns to speak, there will be long pause or overlap. Yule (1998) states that long pause and overlap between turns are considered awkward in a conversation. In accordance, Brett (2001) argues that learners' strategic competence can be a problem solving in communication. That is why, allo-repetition is one of strategies to participate in a conversation by appropriately take and share turns to speak.

Moreover, conversation participants can employ allo-repetition strategy to return the floor. Here, the strategy functions as hearing check. McCarthy (1991) states that conversation participants should be able to provide responses of not taking turn when one has the opportunity. There are signals to indicate that back-channel responses. Allo-repetition strategy is one of signals the participants can employ as back-channeling. Sawir (2003) found that allo-repetition strategy with functions as indication of listenership and ratifying listenership was widely used by foreign language learners as back-channeling. By employing this strategy, the learners could show their good participation in conversation.

The improvements of learners' involvement in learning process, learners' conversation exchanges, learners' turn-taking, and learners' back-channeling have answered the research question 'To what extent can allo-repetition strategy better improve learners' participation in conversation?'. The analysis of questionnaires and interview are needed to show the more evidence to answer the second research question of what is the learners' perception toward the strategy instruction.

The result from the questionnaires mainly shows a positive response from the learners. Most of the learners stated that learning speaking by using this strategy was enjoyable an easy to understand. It means that the learning allo-repetition strategy was not complicated. Moreover, the learners stated that they could build their self-confidence in speaking after learning this strategy. This fact is in accordance with what Brett (2001: 54) says. He states that strategy training could bring about the improvement in the self-esteem of low achiever and greater learner autonomy.

In addition, the learners' comprehension was also affected by the way the lecturer delivered the material. The learners stated that the lecturer could explain it clearly, and delivered it in interesting ways. These perceptions of the learners revealed that the lecturer gave attention to the comments and feedback provided by the learners in every session in which the learners asked the lecturer to repeat the explanation, thus the learners could comprehend it more. However, there were few learners who argued that the lecturer explained the lesson quickly, so that the lesson was difficult to understand. They stated that it was because the lecturer was too

fast in explaining. This condition indicates that the explanation from the lecturer could not be understood by all learners. It could be caused by the learners' different ability in absorbing the knowledge, and also the learners' attendance in previous meeting. Besides, it can be caused by the lecturer in which the lecturer did not pay much attention to it.

The learners also claimed that learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy motivated them to improve and respond to others' statement or performance. It could be caused by the activities which were conducted in the classroom. The learners were not only required to think what to be uttered, but also to understand other's utterances. It means that the learners gained the opportunity to initiate oral communication. It is not only conducting a dialog which had been previously prepared, but also practicing the strategy in any possible situation. This statement is in accordance with Brown (2001) who mentions that part of oral communication competence is the ability to initiate conversations, to nominate topics, to ask questions, to control conversation and to change the subject. It means that in communicative activities, it is important to strive for a classroom in which learners feel comfortable and confident, feel free to take risks and have sufficient opportunities to speak.

Basically, the ability in speaking was not only about the ability in say things a sophisticated manner, but also to show participation, to maintain and develop conversation. The learners claimed that they could converse well with their friends. Since this strategy is not enough just to be known, learners' opportunity to practice it is another crucial thing to be considered. . Some of the learners stated that it helped them speaking because they did not need to get confused about what to say if they find difficulties in speaking, and it could also broaden their knowledge. However, there were still few learners who mentioned that it confused them for its various functions. Therefore, it was kind of challenge for the lecturer to improve her teaching technique in order to avoid learners' problems in comprehending the strategy.

## Conclusion

Allo-repetition strategy better improves learners' participation in conversation. It helps learners to be actively involved in learning process, to converse more exchanges, to manage turns to speak, to give responses to their conversation partner. Then, Learners have positive perception toward the strategy instruction; they have positive perception toward learning speaking by using allo-repetition strategy. They claim that learning speaking by using this strategy make them easier to understand, thus they can enjoy the teaching and learning process; and learners also gain the improvement of their perception of how the lecturer teaches. It is caused by the role of lecturer as the facilitator in the learning process. He facilitates the learners to perform their language in authentic communicative atmosphere

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