THE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH THEMONTESSORIMETHOD

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Abstract
The aim of this study istodevelop students'speaking ability by usingthe Montessori Method. The speaking ability here means the ability of knowing letters, words, phrases, and simple sentences in English. These speakingabilities consist of three aspectsof assessment: accuracy, fluency, and activity. This study was conducted in an elementary labschoolin south Jakartaon the fourth grade students, for sixmonths. This study was conducted in two cycles by applying the Kemmis dan McTaggart Models. Each cycle consists of planning, action, evaluation, and reflection. The second cycle is to give an additional treatment based on the reflection of the first cycle. Each sub-cycle was discussed and analyzed in accordance tosome components. The improvement of the students ability in the speaking component then were discussed and studied. Collaboration and observation were applied to collect the action that was done in this research. The data evaluation and reflection were also applied in order to know the result of the research. Therefore the analysis of the data was donequalitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data were analyzed based on Spradley theory. The result of the quantitative data analysis shows that the students' English speaking ability are increased. Students were able to know the letters, words, phrases, and simple sentences in English. Thus, it can be said that, statistically, there is a significant growth in speaking ability by using Montessori Method in the process of learning speaking skill.

Keywords: Speaking ability, elementary school students, montessori method.

1. INTRODUCTION
The Background of the Study
The purpose of teaching English is students are able to listen, speak, read, and write. Those skillsare very important. The ability to speak is the most important skills of other subjects. This is supported by the statement (Harris and Sipay: 2000: p.5) “At school, speaking ability is the most useful and important skill since it is used as a means for learning other subjects.” Without a good background of speaking skill, a child is going to face difficulties as the skill of learning to speak is mostly needed in a process of learning.

Children can learn foreign language faster than adults, that is why teaching children to speak from their early age is recommended. This is because the children’s cognitive is more flexible that they are easily absorb foreign vocabulary and grammar, and also can practice naturally and enthusiastically. Max-Planck Institute in Germany, (Wolf Singer: 2000 p.102) states that the golden age of children’s language development does exist - the first year of age until the beginning of school-age children. The same thing also expressed by Montessori that in the early years of a child, he/she has what is called Sensitive Periods. During the sensitive periods children receive certain stimulus that makes children tend to succeed if they were taught to speak. At this time a child will experience rapid growth as their brain is like a sponge that can absorb easily, as termed by Montessori “The Absorbent Mind.”

Deborah Ruuskanen: 2004: p.73 said that children were able to be taught two or three
languages at once. The main requirement is that parents speak language that suited the mother tongue that the children will be encouraged to learn a variety of languages even outside the home environment. If the language used in the home environment is the third language, children will learn the language easily when they play with other children in the neighborhood. Therefore the teaching of English to primary school level are allowed as long as not to burden and make children become stressed, it should be fun and in the form of a game.

By using the Montessori Method, the emphasis is more on the early speaking stages of words, phrases, and simple sentences. Initially students are first introduced to the sounds of the letters of through the moving alphabet or what is usually called LMA (Large Moveable Alphabet). Once accustomed to all the alphabet sounds then the first step is the formation of letters into words.

In this way, students are ready and able to start speaking well because they fully understand the words that have been formed. Other materials can also be used such as images and objects. In addition, the Montessori method is able to cope with other problems such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling of words, which in turn is expected to make the student learning activity grow better, fun, natural, and creative. More importantly, the materials that are specially prepared by Montessori make students to be able to perform more independent speaking activities as the speaking materials in the Montessori Method are designed correcting-ready if an error occurred.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a classroom action research. The respondents are students in the fourth grade of primary school in Labschool Setia Budi, South Jakarta. The overall participants in this class consists of various levels of ability, family background, as well as the diversity of subjective view towards English learning. The English language learning materials that were being studied is speaking skill specifically early speaking skills which are: letters, words, phrases, and simple sentences. The research method is action research by using two cycles in which each cycle has the following steps:

1) Preliminary observations: (1) collecting initial information about the condition of teaching English in fourth grade students, (2) identifying problems and difficulties faced in the process of teaching speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation skills.
2) Planning: (1) Determining the target competencies; the competency standards of speaking skill and the increasing willingness of students to speak English; (2) Designing the learning process in the first cycle and the second cycle; (3) designing a test that consists of oral and written questions, learningschedules, the first and second learning cycles.
3) Implementation of the actions: (1) Before implementing the actions, students are tested to know their initial capability which will be compared with the results of their first and second cycle tests; (2) the implementation of the first cycle of actions is held in ten meetings; (3) the follow-up of the first cycle of learning is done through trial of the speaking materials of the Montessori method. The second cycle was implemented to achieve the result that has not been achieved in the first cycle (the repair of the first cycle).
4) Observation and Interpretation: (1) the observation of the actions is carried out by using notes after the implementation of actions. The teacher continued to implement the new teaching techniques as shown by the researcher; (2) during the observation, researcher will be assisted by collaborators who will record what is seen, heard and observed during the
teaching process takes place in the form of field notes.

5) **Reflection:** (1) Analyzing the results of the improvement rate of students’ behavior before and after the action is taken; (2) assess the successes and failures as a preparation for further action.

3. **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In general, students on average already recognize letters well and can speak with correct pronunciation. Most students are able to pronounce words and simple sentences, but they do not yet know the phrase well. Based on observation, the way of teacher deliver the content and teach English at this school is not maximized and this is very influential on their speaking ability. On the other hand students’ interest in learning and pronouncing the letters and words in the English language is very high. Based on the observations result, the planning of the action research then made in order to improve the English language skills on elementary school students through the Montessori method.

3.1 **The first cycle actions**

The result of collaborator’s assessment in general is the English speaking skill of the students learned through the Montessori method is changing and advancing, but the changes are still not maximized. Students got high score in only one of three aspects that were set by the researchers and collaborators, at other aspects students are still lacking or still far from the expected results. This happened because the implementation of actions in the first cycle was carried out only in 6 meetings with duration of 40 minutes / meeting so that the improvement of English speaking skills through the Montessori Method is not so good. In accordance with the action plan, the second cycle then proceeds. In the second cycle, the activities are carried out by emphasising on improving the techniques and the ability to speak properly, fluently, and understand the meaning of sentences in English. Thus the duration for the implementation of teaching and learning activities is added so that an increase in students’ English speaking skills can be achieved as expected.

3.2 **Results of the second cycle action**

Based on the above explanation, the findings of this study are that students can recognize letters, vowels, and consonants in English well enough. Students also are able to distinguish and analyze the sound of the letters in the beginning, middle, and at the end of a word. Students can speak accurately, fluently, and understand English sentences. Students are able to know the meaning of a word with the help of objects, pictures and LMA. Lastly, students can compose and write sentences appropriately.

4. **CONCLUSION**

Language as a means of communication is a form of performance. Language learning should be more emphasis on the function of language as a communication tool rather than learning about the language system. Moreover, the learning aspect of speech is a skill. Learning should focus on practice and training. Learning must be programmed and planned activities for the sake of significance and success of achieving the goal of these activities.

Speaking skill should be given to the fourth grade of primary school students because at this age the students have a sensitive period in speaking. Unfortunately, this sensitive period is often overlooked that the students have lost interest in exercise speaking mainly in English
lessons. Besides there are many unpreparedness factors and lack of success of students in speaking English such as; a limited time, inadequate facilities, lack of creativity and innovation of teachers, and others.

In this study the Montessori method then used as an alternative method in order to increase the students' motivation in speaking English. Learning to speak English with the Montessori Method was able to enhance students’ skills in speaking English. The strength of the Montessori method are; first, it provides a lot of supporting materials such as pictures, objects, pink cards, and LMA in which were able to stimulate the interest and abilities of students in the process of learning to speak English. Second, the Montessori Method is able to train accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of students in speaking English. Third, the Montessori method systematically preparing students sensitivity in speaking English fluency in pronunciation, analyzing, and distinguishing the sounds of letters. Fourth, the Montessori Method prepares and teaches the pronunciation of words, letters, phrases, and simple sentences in English gradually. Fifth, the Montessori Method is able to train students to be more independent in speaking English.

The process of teaching and learning activities that was provided is using aspects of improvement of speaking skills which are; aspects of precision (accuracy), fluency, and understanding. The stages in its activities in general are: (1). preparatory phase; teachers prepare all materials to be used, determine competence, and others; (2). stage presentations or presentation; the teacher shows how to use the Montessori Method materials, (3). rehearsal stage, and (4). evaluation stage.

The analysis of the data was done by testing the difference (t-test). A calculation result in the first cycle was obtained $t = 14.08$ with $\alpha = 0.05$, and the second cycle's $t = 21.04$ is obtained with $\alpha = 0.05$. Thus in the first cycle of $14.08 > 2.09$ hence there is an improvement in students English speaking skills after conducting action research through the Montessori method. In the second cycle $21.04 > 2.09$ hence there is an improvement in students English speaking skills after conducting action research through the Montessori method. To sum up, the results of the action research shows that through the Montessori method the ability of speaking English of the fourth grade elementary school students in Labschool Setia Budi, South Jakarta show some changes, differences and improvements.

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