

The Influences of Conversation Program at *Madrasah Aliyah Babul Huda Tualang Cut* in improving The Students' Speaking Skill

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to determine the influence of a conversation program in improving students' speaking skills at Islamic Boarding School Babul Huda. The qualitative method was used in this research by using three techniques; observation, questionnaires, and interview in data collecting. The observation was used in order to get information directly about the space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal, and feeling of the population. The questionnaires were used to gain more valid and reliable data about the students' responses to the conversation program. At the same time, the interview was used to investigate whether the conversation program influences and improves the students' speaking skills. The population of this study was only female of the students at MA Babul Huda. Thirty students were taken as the sample of the study. The result showed that the conversation program improved the students' speaking skill based on the data obtained. The conversation program influenced the students' speaking skills in communicating and interacting with one another; moreover, the students explained that they could present and share their ideas among the groups after the speaking activity.

Keywords: *Influence; Conversation Program; Speaking Skill*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Boarding School is now a favorite place for parents to school their children. They study not only religion but also general education and especially the application of foreign languages. Furthermore, it is in Islamic boarding school that complete all sciences such as linguistics.

Speaking is one of four essential skills in English learning, speaking is the most demanding skill in daily life. Every person needs to communicate with others through speaking. Speaking plays an important role in making a social interaction with other people to gain information. Thus, every people must have good speaking skills. Speaking is one of the ways to express ideas, feelings, experiences and share knowledge with other people in formal or informal situations and ask for something. The skill of mastering speaking is a measurement to know how far a student has mastered their learning.

There are numerous techniques to help students enhance their speaking abilities. Making a native speaker practice, reading English books, newspapers, magazines, or even watching films on television or video films are all options. "Encountering new terms includes learning new words by reading books, listening to TV, radio, and reading

newspaper and magazines," according to Payne, as referenced by Hatch and Brown (1995) in their book. It is also hoped that teachers will improve their teaching creativity by utilizing any teaching aids that are currently available in their contexts or by implementing some intense programs.

Nowadays, most countries in the world use English as a native language, second language, and still for others as a foreign language; for some Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, English is used as a second language besides their mother tongue. In Indonesia, English is emphasized as the first foreign language which is formally taught from elementary schools up to university level. Ronald Wardhaugh (1986) named English as a *lingua franca* as a means of international language in many parts. It is the international language for trade, travel, commerce, and other international relations. There is no doubt that in this global era, English is the most widely spoken or broadly used language in the world nowadays as more native speakers speak it than any other language.

One of the Islamic Boarding schools in Tualang Cut, namely MA Babul Huda under the *Sabilul Ulum Diniyah Islamiah* foundation, has its own way to enrich their students speaking, which is by running a program called *Muhadatsah* (in Arabic) or conversation program. This program focused on speaking practice and also completing vocabulary, reading, listening. It is because they are aware that speaking practice is important for the students. Students are hardly trained to master speaking skills through various activities.

Born and Yule (1983) state that learning to talk in the foreign language is often considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning for the teacher to help students learn it. It must mean that speaking is the most difficult skill in learning English; mastering speaking is not accessible. The students need to know and in other places or other times; for example, they must attend a conversation program. Therefore, the researcher must find out the influence of this program in improving the students speaking skills.

It has been known that speaking is a part of the important skills in learning English. To define speaking, some linguists have different opinions because their background of study is diverse. However, all of the views have similarities. According to Cameron (2001), speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them. Moreover, it is recognized as an interactive, social, and contextualized communicative event. Martinez Flor (2006) states that speaking requires learners to possess knowledge about how to produce not only linguistically connect but also pragmatically appropriate utterances. While, Lewis and Hill (1993) state that speaking covers many things and the pronunciation of individual sounds.

Speaking is so much part of daily life that it makes it for granted. Thombury (2005) also says that speaking is interactive and requires the ability to co-operate in the management of speaking turns. It also typically takes place in real-time, with little time for detailed planning. He says speaking represents a real challenge to most learners.

According to Levelt (1995) speaking is one of man's complex skills. It is a skill which is unique to our species. MC Laughlin in O'Malley and Chamot (1990) states that

speaking is an example of a complex cognitive skill that can be differentiated into various hierarchical sub-skills, some of which might require controlled processing, while others could be processed automatically. Skehan says speaking is possible because of the way language is represented.

Conversation Program/*Muhadatsah*

A conversation program or *Muhadatsah* is an English speaking skill; in this case conversation program or *muhadatsah* becomes very important for educational institutions that require students to master foreign languages such as English and Arabic. In terms of conversation or *muhadatsah*, *a way or method for presenting language in learning English through a conversation* in this conversation or *muhadatsah* can be done between two or more people.

Conversation or *muhadatsah* should be the main topic that must be studied by every student, especially those in Islamic boarding schools that require English and Arabic. Conversation or *muhadatsah* is one of the teaching methods in learning English in Islamic boarding schools.

The Strategy of Conversation/*Muhadatsah*

In teaching English with the conversation or *muhadatsah* strategy, some steps must be considered, so that learning goes well. The steps are as mentioned by Izzan below:

- a. The teacher first explains the meaning of each word taught, either by writing on the chalkboard or mentioning it through the dictation method.
- b. For conversation or *muhadatsah* method for adults, students are expected to be more active than teachers.
- c. After the teacher has delivered conversation or *muhadatsah*, the teacher should open a question and answer session or something related to student activity
- d. Active language acquisition is the one that works a lot, not passive language acquisition.
- e. The teacher always facilitates the interlocutors of students in turn with one another to eliminate embarrassment or lack of confidence.
- f. There must be an atmosphere of compulsory English in the classroom, so the teacher must start learning by using English that is good and right so that students are moved to use English.
- g. If the conversation or *muhadatsah* method will be used in further learning, the teacher should tell approximately what material will be discussed, so that students prepare.
- h. At the end of the lesson, the teacher should provide support and motivation to be more active in learning English.
- i. The teacher prepares the conversation or *muhadatsah* material carefully and chooses materials appropriate for the student's age.

Coversation / *Muhadatsah* strategy also has stages that need to be considered, so that students' ability to talk slowly can be achieved. The above steps require the proper method so that the objectives can be implemented well. There are several learning methods to converse while still paying attention to the level of students' abilities.

Conversation or *Muhadatsah* Exercise

According to Tarigan, many techniques and models of conversation or *muhadatsah* exercises have been developed by language teachers. Every approach that language instructors place have developed.

METHOD

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research that focused on speaking activities in conversation program at MA Babul Huda Tualang Cut. The researcher collects the data, makes a description, and finally makes a conclusion.

Moleong (2004) states that qualitative research is a type of research that does not include calculating or numbering. Similarly, Suryabrata (2015) asserts that a descriptive strategy is a strategy intended to describe situations or events. In this research, the role of the researcher is an observer, explorer, distributor of the questioner, and interviewer to find out how extend this conversation program / *muhadatsah* in influence and improving student speaking skill.

The research examined view as part of the research's subject to gather data for this study. The second class of junior high school at Madrasah Aliyah babul Huda in 2018 / 2019 is the focus of this study. There were 26 students to fill questionnaires and five students to interview as the sample of this research. In this research, the writer used a closed questionnaire, the list of questionnaire will be distributed to the students. It was purposed to gain more valid and reliable data about the students' responses in speaking practice in conversation programs. The interview was analyzed by using data reduction, data display, and data conclusion drawing/ verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, the writer elaborates some brief and clear explanations concerning the research data obtained through observation, questionnaires, and interview. Moreover, it could be examined whether the research questions of this research were answered or not. The research question is the following are the questions that should be answer related to the background of study How does the conversation program improve the students' speaking skills at *Madrasah Aliyah Babul Huda*, Tualang Cut. The discussion deals with whether conversation program improve the students' speaking skill.

Table 1. Conversation program is useful

Answer	Students	Precentage
Strongly Agree	24	92,30%

Agree	2	7,70%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

The table above shows that conversation program is helpful for all the students, which can be seen that twenty-four students (92,30%) strongly agree and two students (7,70%) agree. At the same time, none of them disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. Thus, it can be concluded that all students (26 students) agreed that speaking skill is useful.

Table 2. Conversation program encourages' willingness to practice in speaking English.

Answer	Students	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	73,07%
Agree	7	26,93%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

This table shows that nineteen students (73,07%) strongly agree, and seven students (26,93%) agree with the statement. So, all of the students believed that the conversation program encourages" willingness to practice in speaking English.

Table 3. Learning in conversation program is interesting.

Answer	Students	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	15,39%
Agree	21	80,77%
Disagree	1	3,84%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

Table 4. Conversation program is important to increase students' speaking skill and vocabulary in English.

Answer	Students	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	65,38%
Agree	9	34,62

Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

The information that can be inferred from the table above is that (63,38%) of the seventeen students strongly agree that a conversation program is important to increase students speaking skills and vocabulary in English. Meanwhile, the other (34,62%) of the nine students agree about the statement.

Table 5. The conversation program is very important to improve skill in speaking English

Answer	Students	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	65,38%
Agree	9	34,61%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

The table 4.6 depicts that seventeen students (65,39%) strongly agree and nine students (34,61%) agree that conversation program is very important to improve skill in speaking English.

Table 6. Conversation program is suitable medium for increasing students' speaking skill and vocabularies in English.

Answer	Students	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	65,39%
Agree	9	34,61%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

The information that can be inferred from the table above is that (65,39%) of the seventeen students strongly agree that the conversation program is a suitable medium for increasing students' speaking skills and vocabulary in English.

Table 7. The students can share knowledge during learn in the conversation program.

Answer	Students	Precentage
Strongly Agree	20	76,93%
Agree	6	23,07%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

The table above indicates that most students strongly agree (76,93%) of twenty students, and six students (23,07%) agree with that statement.

Table 8. The activity in conversation program encourages the students to be more motivated and spirited practicing to speak English with their fellow students.

Answer	Students	Precentage
Strongly Agree	16	61,53%
Agree	10	38,47%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

Based on the table, this question aims at knowing whether the activities in conversation program encourages the students to be more motivated and spirited practicing to speak English with their fellow students. Sixteen students (61,53%) strongly agree, and ten (38,47%) agree about the statement.

Table 9. In conversation program to make students confidents to talk by English

Answer	Students	Precentage
Strongly Agree	13	50%
Agree	13	50%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

By analyzing the table above, a conversation program can be recognized to make students the confidence to talk in English. It can be proven that thirteen students (50,00%) strongly agree, and thirteen students (50,00%) agree with this statement.

Table 4.11 Conversation program practice the English speaking

Answer	Students	Precentage
Strongly Agree	11	42,30%
Agree	15	57,70%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	26	100%

Related to the table above, eleven students (42,30%) strongly agree, and fifteen students (57,70%) agree that conversation programs practice English speaking. In addition, none of the students disagree and strongly disagree to the statement. It means that this conversation program is really a conversation program to practice English speaking.

After interviewing the English teacher and the students, the researcher found that the conversation program is handy for improving the students' speaking skills in communicating and interacting with one another. The teacher concurred that conversation program was practical and valuable. He explained that after the speaking activity, the students could present and share their ideas among the groups confidently.

Moreover, based on the writer's observation, it was found that the students' enthusiasm in conversation program helped them to absorb the learning materials that affected their speaking improvement. The teacher used speaking with other friends as his technique in teaching speaking and the students were more active in learning process, they could freely express and share their ideas and opinion either with their pairs or with their friends to solve the problem. The students who had the background knowledge tried to explain their friends about the topic, since the students could deliver the information toward listeners enjoyably and not critical thinking to learn and students' confidence to speak.

Regarding to research findings, the writer concluded that conversation program had improving their speaking skill. It was also supported by the result of the questionnaire, which showed that the conversation program is very important to enhance skill in speaking English where none of them disagree with the statement. Also, it was supported by the result which shows that conversation program is a suitable medium for increasing students' speaking skills and vocabulary in English. Furthermore, conversation program encourages a willingness to practice speaking English. It could be assumed that the more they practice, the more proficient their ability will be.

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that the conversation program can help students improve their speaking skills, particularly in terms of using appropriate vocabulary, critical thinking, and being brave enough to share their main ideas, as well as encouraging them to actively communicate with others.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, calculating the series data, and analyzing it. It could be conclude that the conversation program improved the students' speaking skill. The students' skill in speaking has been enhanced after learning with conversation program. Based on the result of the questionnaires, the majority of the students had a positive response toward implementing the conversation program in learning speaking. 92,30% of the students claimed that this conversation program very useful for them, 7,70% agreed, and none was disagreed. In addition, 73,07% of students strongly agreed, and 26,93% claimed that this program encouraged their willingness to practice English. Furthermore, 63,38% of the students strongly agreed that conversation program increased their speaking skills and vocabulary, and 34,62% agreed with the statement. Besides, 61,53% said that they strongly agreed, and 38,47% claimed the activities in conversation program encouraged the students to be more motivated and excited in practicing English with their fellow students. Besides, the students can share knowledge during conversation activities. As for the students who still have some problems in speaking, the most common problem faced by the students in the conversation program is lack of self-confidence.

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