

# OUTDOOR LEARNING ACTIVITY: IS IT EFFECTIVE TO ROUSE STUDENTS' SPEAKING?

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of outdoor learning activity in improving students speaking. 30 students were selected from 125 students of the third semester as the participants of the study. The design of the study was one group pre-test post-test quasi experimental design. The group was taught by outdoor activity. Then oral test was given in both pre and post-tests. The result of the test showed that the mean score of pre-test was 70.1 while the mean score of post-test was 79.5. Accordingly, the statistical analysis affirmed that outdoor learning activity was effective in improving the speaking ability of the students; another conclusion was that outdoor activity provided authentic material to the students where authentic material was very beneficial as it gave a valuable insight into a culture and language. More, outdoor environment included was potential to encourage meaningful learning by moving between the abstract and concrete as well as transforming experience into knowledge through reflection and communication

**Keywords:** *outdoor learning activity, English speaking skill*

Effective teaching involves a deep understanding of subject matter, learning theory and students divergent, planning, and classroom instruction strategies (Barry, 2010, p.3). The classroom where most of learning carried out is counted as a part of learning environment which brings influence on the success of learning. The classroom is in the first place an entrance for student to find a sense of continuity in learning (Flemming,

2005). Classes occur in the same place at the same time every week; it can be said as monotonous and this kind of monotony is welcomed in the world of a new student.

A good classroom management and organization whether it is acknowledged or not, also gives impact to the effectiveness of the learning process. Moreover, the more various activities conducted in the classroom the more enthusiasts and

motivated the students will be, that's why the teacher needs to maximize the activity inside the class to maintain the students' enthusiasm and interest during the learning.

However, indoor classroom is not sufficient enough to provide the students need. They also need outdoor experience, regardless to the appropriateness with the material; they need it because outdoor activity will give such refreshment and real-life experience in learning which is very beneficial to the students. Good atmosphere of teaching and learning process is very required, especially in the English classroom where the dynamic interaction of teacher-students is implemented (Guo, 2011). The formal situation inside the class can create both, anxiety and boredom to the students that make them become less motivated during the learning process which result in non-maximized process of absorbing the material given.

Equally important, motivation takes a major role on students learning in education. However, the level of motivation (high or low motivation) effects on students' success. The lack of it may affect students' attitude and be also considered to be detrimental to the performance of language learning. Without motivation, learning is not possible. Due to motivation, students do any task and achieve learning objectives. Motivation increases the performance of learning (Brown, 2001, p.75). Teachers motivate the students and achieve their task without motivation is difficult to achieve. Motivation is helpful for reaching the objective for teachers. Through personal approach or any kind of amusing activity, a teacher could arouse the motivation from the students.

In English learning, the lack in motivation are kind of hinders that may distract or disturb the effectiveness of learning. In Speaking, students could lose their interest or willing to speak up even though they have the ideas to convey because of this case, mentally they will get down.

Outdoor Learning creates informal circumstance where the students or people can share everything without minding the formal context that may occur inside the class and that makes more intimate relationship where people can talk more enthusiastic and with no nerves, where outdoor class gives more refreshment by its atmosphere like the air and the situation. And it is believed that the brain works better in a good condition (Pearson, 2004). However, it is strongly believed that it can also arouse the students' motivation in learning.

Moreover, Thanasoulas (as cited in Guo, 2007) states that Outdoor Learning Activity is related to real life experience. It is also count as authentic material. Klein (2010) argues that using authentic material is a successful factor as it gives a valuable insight into a culture and language. It is more advantages to the learning achievement. Outdoor environment include its potential to encourage meaningful learning by moving between the abstract and concrete as well as transforming experience into knowledge through reflection and communication (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 1998; Jordet, 2010). It provides the students the basics and principles to interact in real life situation. Hence, Outdoor Learning Activity is suitable to teach the four aspects in English learning, (listening, speaking, reading, and

writing) but there are some topics that are most suitable to be taught indoor.

Furthermore, Outdoor Learning Activity addresses multiple needs and interests of students and creates a variety of authentic English language inputs (Bas, 2008). Project Work (Fried-Booth, 2002, p.7) presents various project activities on different scales. Some can be carried out within one class period; some require weeks. The adoption of this learning “encourages students to move out of the classroom and into the world” and “helps to bridge the gap between language study and language use”. Outdoor Learning Activity allows teachers and students to move beyond the limitations of a traditional English curriculum (Foss, Carney, McDonald, & Rooks, 2007). Engaging students in Outdoor Learning Activity offers the significant benefit of expanding the student learning environment. Realizing that their normal surroundings and activities offer meaningful opportunities to learn English is likely to spark interest and increase motivation to learn.

Related to the review above, such kind of problem was also faced by English Education Department students, Muria Kudus University. Information from observation and interview with the lecturer and the students of the advance speaking class of the third semester students of Muria Kudus University showed that the lack of motivation occurred when the class ran for a quite long time and the interaction between the students to lecturer got less. The students tend to stay quiet, and by the time, they got bored caused by they get ran out of activity. This matter caused the students felt so lazy or they felt like they didn't want to talk during the lesson. The students also felt reluctant

to speak up when they were given a chance by the lecturer. Therefore, this study would try to implement Outdoor Learning Activity, which is one of teaching strategies that will give different atmosphere which is lighter and more enjoyable in the process of learning. And the formulated question related to the problem of this study is; was there any significant difference in speaking ability of the students before and after being taught by using outdoor learning activity?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is essentially quantitative. This study was carried out with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The pre- and post-test were designed to be the same. The population of this study was the third semester of English education department of Muria Kudus University. At this department, there were 4 classes. However, purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Hence, class D which consisted of 30 students was taken as the sample.

An oral test was administered to the students before the treatment to examine the students' speaking ability. The test was about describing person or things.

Then, on the treatment, students worked in pairs, or small groups. Pairs or groups would have to collect more information. The students were given the topic and the instruction to work outside the class, and then the students did the interview with people that they meet, after that the students compiled as much and as detail information from the interviewee. After obtaining the information, the students were about to have presentation.

Prior to the activity, an analysis of sample data has been presented so that

students understand what is expected of them. The whole class then discussed the correctness and appropriateness of the usage and translation of the examples. In terms of the presentation format, lecturers who use this project could have students present the information either orally.

After all session of treatment done, a posttest is administered to examine the effect of implementing the outdoor learning activity on the students' achievement. The results of pre-test and post-test then were compared. In analyzing the scores using t-test, the formula proposed by Ali (1984, pp.179-182) was used to find out the Mean and the Standard Deviation of both the pretest and posttest. The t-test formula was to know whether there is significant difference of pre - test and post - test or not.

To get the score of the students' speaking ability by oral test, scoring scale by Brown (2004, p.172) was used. It covered Pronunciation, Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, Grammatical Accuracy, Fluency, and Relevance and adequacy of content.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 describes the result of test before the students treated by outdoor learning activity. The result showed that 70% of the students score were fewer than 71, moreover, they were categorized as poor.

**Table 1**  
**Score distribution of pre-test**

Interval Score	f	Percentage (%)
78-80	6	20
75-77	3	10
72-74	0	0
69-71	12	40
66-68	0	0

63-65	4	13.33
60-62	5	16.67
$\Sigma$	30	100

A significant improvement was clearly described after the students had some outdoor learning activity. It could be seen from Table 2 below. All students score were higher than 70.

**Table 2**  
**Score distribution of post-test**

Interval Score	F	Percentage (%)
88-90	3	10
85-87	5	16.67
82-84	0	0
79-81	11	36.67
76-78	0	0
73-75	9	30
70-72	2	6.67
$\Sigma$	30	100

To answer the research questions, which seek to identify whether or not there is a statistical differences in students' speaking due to the outdoor learning activity, means and standard deviations of the pre and posttest scores were investigated, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**T-test Result of Speaking Ability before and after being taught by Outdoor Learning Activity (N=30)**

Test	Mean	SD	T-crit	T-obtained
Pre test	70.1	6.16	2.045	11.31
Post test	79.5	5.52		

Table 3 analysed the compared t-test result of the mean of the pre-test was 70.1, and the mean of the post test was 79.5 and the standard deviation of the pre-test was 6.16 and the standard deviation of the post test was 5.52. The t-obtained of both pre-test and

post-test was 11.31. The degree of freedom (df) for both pre-test and post-test was 29. At the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) 0.05 for one tailed testing with the degree of freedom 29, the critical value of t-table is 2.045.

Because the  $t_0$  fell in the critical region, it can be stated that there was a significant difference between the Speaking Ability of the Students before and after being taught by Using Outdoor Learning Activity.

Based on the result of pre-test, the writer found out that the highest score is 80 and the lowest score is 60. From the calculation of the data in pre-test, the mean is 70.1 and the standard deviation is 6.16. From the result on pre-test, it can be concluded that some students still had low speaking ability.

Then, the students were trained to endure the feeling of humiliation or being ashamed to speak English in public. It was hoped that they would get used to it that it could help them reduce their anxiety level and increased their frequency in speaking and also they did not have to be shy to speak English anymore. Moreover, the students were exposed to speak English outside and hopefully they would lose their perception to only speak English during the class. Next, the writer asked one group to come forward to tell the task of being a tour guide. The last step was assessment to the students' performance or evaluation. The writer gave score to the students based on the aspects that have been decided, such as: Appropriateness, Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, Grammatical Accuracy, Fluency, Relevance and adequacy of content.

After conducting the treatment, the writer gave post-test to the students to test their speaking ability after being taught by Using Outdoor

Learning Activity. After getting the data on post-test, the writer calculated and analyzed it. The writer found the highest score of post-test is 90 and the lowest score is 70. Based on the calculation, the mean is 79.5 and the standard deviation is 5.52. From that result, it can be concluded that the post-test is better than the pre-test.

The statistical data obtained from the test implied that outdoor learning activity is effective to improve the speaking abilities of students. As it was mentioned earlier, there was one group of consisted of 30 students and an oral test was administered as pre and post-test. Then, the results of pre and post-test were compared. The results exposed that the students in the post-test performed better in their speaking test. Moreover, in comparison to the pre-test, the mean of the group in the post-test displayed a significant increase. This revealed that Outdoor learning activity is effective in improving the students' ability of speaking.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that outdoor learning activity is effective in improving the speaking ability of the students because it provides real life experience that increases the motivation, as a consequence, their performance of learning is also increased.

Additionally, the Outdoor Learning Activity will help the lecturer provides authentic material to the students where authentic material is very beneficial as it gives a valuable insight into a culture and language. Moreover, Outdoor environment include its potential to encourage meaningful learning by moving between the abstract and concrete

as well as transforming experience into knowledge through reflection and communication.

As the pedagogical implications, it is recommended to apply outdoor learning activity, especially in improving the productive skills of language (speaking and writing). It provide students with opportunities to encourage meaningful learning by moving between the abstract and concrete. Consequently, it realized that the normal surroundings and activities offer more meaningful opportunities to learn English and significantly increase motivation to learn.

Lecturer could modify this kind of out-of-class activity based on the level of their students. Advanced students can be required to correct the problems they perceive. For lower-level students, it is advisable to limit the activity to collecting English vocabulary and usage because of the students' limitations in language analysis. Teachers can modify the activity to work on idioms, word collocations, syntax, or semantics.

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