

## IMPROVING ENGLISH STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH AN ACTION LEARNING STRATEGY

**Kasmaini**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu,  
Sumatera, Indonesia*  
Email: [kasmaini@unib.ac.id](mailto:kasmaini@unib.ac.id)

**Sudarwan Danim**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu,  
Sumatera, Indonesia*  
Email: [dansudarwan@gmail.com](mailto:dansudarwan@gmail.com)

**Muhammad Kristiawan**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu,  
Sumatera, Indonesia*  
Email: [muhammadkristiawan@unib.ac.id](mailto:muhammadkristiawan@unib.ac.id)

**Zahrída**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu,  
Sumatera, Indonesia*  
Email: [zahrída@unib.ac.id](mailto:zahrída@unib.ac.id)

**Sufiyandi**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu,  
Sumatera, Indonesia*  
Email: [sufiyandi@unib.ac.id](mailto:sufiyandi@unib.ac.id)

**Dwi Maharrani**

*English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
Universitas Sriwijaya, South Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia*  
Email: [dwimaharrani@unsri.ac.id](mailto:dwimaharrani@unsri.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** For students of English education, speaking skills are of paramount importance. However, in the context of English students at Universitas Bengkulu, many students seemed to still struggle with speaking skills. Therefore, to cope with this problem, this classroom action research was conducted with the aim of improving the speaking skills of students who took English conversation course by applying action learning strategy (ALS) since this strategy was scientifically promising. Two phases of the class action design were employed in this research project. The data were garnered using observations, interviews, and English-speaking test. It was evident from the first phase of observation that almost all students recommended the ALS. The data from the interview revealed that a significant proportion of students had profited from this approach, and there were few students who spoke in front of the class. The first phase's precise decision how an average score of 74 was attained by the students. At the second phase, the observation and interview data showed that nearly all students actively participated during discussions and had good improvements of English-speaking skills. The result revealed that the implementation of ALS in the conversation course in semester 1 improves S1 students' speaking skills.

**Keywords:** *action learning strategy; English-speaking skills; University of Bengkulu students.*

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking, reading, listening, and writing are the four skills that English students need to be proficient in, each of which has a different level of difficulty. Speaking, however, is the most difficult skill for English students at the

University of Bengkulu. Skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency are required for this skill. As speaking is believed to be the most productive oral skill, students must perform their ideas in the speaking section in addition to having a theoretical understanding of the vocabulary and grammar that will be used. Additionally, they must separate ideas into verbal and non-verbal forms (Riswanto *et al.*, 2022).

Using English in verbal communication is a problem for the English-speaking students at the University of Bengkulu. It can be observed in a variety of situations, including daily interactions, discussions, and undergraduate thesis exams. The students use improper grammar and a mixture of Indonesian and English to convey their ideas. In terms of coherence and vocabulary, there is also a context-related problem.

Indonesian and English are frequently mixed together because of their limited vocabulary. Some studies have found that students' limited vocabulary is their main barrier to effective idea expression in speaking (Khan *et al.*, 2018; Panjaitan *et al.*, 2022; Rullu & Daburan, 2020). Meanwhile, speaking is a crucial component if students want to complete their studies at the University of Bengkulu. Therefore, lecturers should give full attention to students struggling with performance or competence problems.

Based on the researcher's observations, the students' speaking ability at the University of Bengkulu needs to be improved as it is still poor. This is especially true for argumentative speaking and reasoned discussion. At this level, it is also essential to have fluency as well as a variety of vocabulary and pronunciations. Tampubolon (2020) asserted that a large number of students struggle to express themselves in English, particularly during the debating and argumentation stages. The finding indicated that there is no connection between theory-based English materials and the practice. Students are still required to comprehend and master a wide range of speaking skills, both in theory and in practice. While this prerequisite is an essential and unavoidable requirement as a requirement to become a skilled English teacher.

The English Language Study Program FKIP UNIB has provided a variety of courses in this area, including conversation, speaking for discussion, and speaking for presentations. These three courses are developed to maximize students' communication skills. The implementation has not been used to its maximum potential, especially in upper-semester courses like

conversation and speaking for presentations. Implementing the Action Learning Strategy (hereafter as ALS) is one way to make the most of conversation courses. This method includes six steps to boost speaking abilities: highlighting the issue, collaborating with others, posing questions, taking actions, committing to learn and scaffolding by MKO (More Knowledgeable Person), such as coaches and trainers.

The results of tracking literature reviews and research results that have been carried out by previous researchers regarding ALS both from online sources (Open Knowledge Map) to determine research maps in the context of this ALS or offline found the fact that it has never been implemented by lecturers in particular in the English Education Study Program, FKIP UNIB.

The studies that have been conducted regarding the improvement of speaking ability were detected, among others; Kurniawan (2018) regarding the use of Edmodo online learning media in the English class for discussion of students in the English study program. Kurniawan (2019) on the application of google voice in the English for discussion course and Kurniawan (2021) on the application of the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) model in the class of students of the English Education study program, FKIP University of Bengkulu. Based on the results of the search and tracking of previous studies, it is concluded that there is a novelty in the use of strategies, especially the ALS.

Referring to the literature review, the experience of researchers during teaching and interacting with students as well as the results of the analysis and synthesis of the concepts, procedures and objectives of this strategy, ALS is very appropriate to be applied to improve the speaking skills of students of English Education FKIP UNIB.

The speaking skills of undergraduate students of English Education FKIP Bengkulu University were detected from their speaking activities using English from various forums and momentum both inside and outside the classroom. The results of the researcher's diagnosis, as well as the lecturer in conversation courses, concluded that the average ability of undergraduate students in English education at FKIP was still relatively low. This is evidenced by the results of the empirical experience of the researchers themselves and supported by lecturers who are competent in speaking skills (speaking for discussion, speaking for presentations), so that models, approaches, methods, techniques, and strategies are needed

that can improve these speaking skills. This research is guided by the following research questions: First, how to improve students' speaking skills in conversation courses using ALS? Second, what are students' perceptions of the ALS?

Speaking is one way to convey messages to other people. This message can be in the form of thoughts, ideas, complaints, and criticisms either directly or indirectly. Messages can be received well if the delivery can be understood by the recipient. For that, the messenger must have speaking skills. These skills include mastery of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The four speaking skills in questions are illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. *The four speaking skills and their parts*

The first part is vocabulary mastery (vocabulary), which means that the speaker must understand diction, jargon and word forms (nouns, adjectives and verbs). In addition, Afzal (2019) states that vocabulary has two forms: active and passive. In active vocabulary, students are taught words and they can use the words to express themselves verbally and in writing. Meanwhile, passive vocabulary refers to the words that students are able to recognize and understand when a context is presented to them but cannot be produced spontaneously by the students in written or spoken form.

The second part deals with pronunciation. In speaking, a person actually uses the correct pronunciation according to the standards of a native speaker, the intonation, stress and rhythm are right according to needs. An English learner does not have to have a pronunciation similar to that of native speakers (native like) because there is the influence of the mother tongue. In line with this, Puspendari and Basthomi (2022) "Mother tongue (L1) has a clear influence on learning L2 pronunciation". But the most important thing is the correct pronunciation according to the standard or known as RP (receipt pronunciation)

either British or American. Some previous studies found that complexity in pronunciation causes difficulties for foreign learners which resulted in many errors of foreign language learners in terms of pronunciation (Fabra, 2022; Lestari *et al.*, 2020)

The third part is grammar. These language rules include sentence structure and elements forming phrases, clauses and sentences as well as main and subordinate clauses. A speaker must understand verbal, nominal, active and passive sentences with different tenses and how and when to use them. Besides, the speaker also needs to understand about nouns, adjectives, adverbs and at the same time how to use them. According to Wilang and Vo (2018) "Like many EFL teachers, the researchers have found themselves in awkward situations where teacher-led interactions are frequently met with silence." This means a situation where many students or students are just silent in class talking because of lack of grammar, especially what often happens in English classes where English is a foreign language.

The fourth part is fluency. Fluency in conveying ideas without stopping and hesitation even though grammar errors still appear here and there. The ability to express opinions fluently and clearly without much pause (fillers and repetition) is a very important skill. However, Tavakoli and Hunter's study (2018) found that fluency is often defined broadly by teachers, who often use it interchangeably with speaking ability. In addition, the majority of the activities reported by teachers were useful for improving speaking practice rather than fluency. Fluency in speaking is a skill that needs to be trained continuously by communicating in real contexts such as discussions about a particular issue in English (FGD) in order to discuss a topic. In addition, study conducted by Riadil (2020) revealed that the issues of English-speaking students are closely related to linguistic issues (grammar, lack of vocabulary, and poor pronunciation) and psychological issues (loss of self-confidence, insecurity, and nervousness). This is in line with the study conducted by Hanifa (2018) which found that factors that cause students' anxiety when learning speaking skills are cognitive factors (topics, genre, interlocutors, and processing demands), affective factors (feelings towards the topic and/or the participants, and self-consciousness), and performance factors (mode, degree of collaboration, discourse control, planning and rehearsal time, time pressure and environmental conditions).

Concerning all those notions, the purpose of learning to speak is in order to build students' speaking skills with all components in speaking skills so as to cause changes in both cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. In this case, Nur *et al.* (2021) elucidate that teaching methods should be treated as theories to be evaluated to decide which strategies function best in a particular second/foreign language classroom. Therefore, we have to find the right strategy for the students we teach according to the context.

ALS was first introduced by Revans (1982: 626-627). He defined this strategy of as a means intellectual, emotional or physical development that requires subjects through responsible involvement in some real complex and stressful to achieve intended change to improve observable behavior henceforth in the problem field". This strategy is oriented towards discovery learning which emphasizes the strength of groups and individuals to solve a problem. Furthermore, Zuber-Skerritt (2002) argued that the success of an action learning strategy depends largely in these values: collaboration, trust, openness, team spirit and mutual respect, and tolerance of mistakes.

The basic principles in this strategy are the group's efforts to solve a problem through discussion and reflection and action. Waluyo and Arsyad (2022) explained that students' cohesiveness has a significant effect but is detrimental to students' grades. Students must unite or cooperate but sometimes it is detrimental to their scores because group scores equal individual scores.

In the process of carrying out group actions, people who are experts in their fields are assisted so that problem solving orientation is guided to the final goal to be achieved. This learning strategy is very democratic because every individual in the group has the right to speak, express opinions and at the same time provide criticism and suggestions for improvement. Shimamoto (2022) elucidated that self-expression is a pillar of the communicative language classroom. In other words, the expression of each individual is the key in communicating or speaking in learning.

This is the spirit of active learning and cooperative learning that emphasizes the activeness of students in learning. This is in line with the National Education System Law No. 20/2003 Chapter 1 Article 1 which reads "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process

so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by himself, society, nation and state.

The following are the steps of ALS. The first step is to prepare problems. Problems must be important, specific and can be solved in groups. In relation to the process of learning to speak, the themes raised are in accordance with general problems that all group members understand and can be traced from various literary sources, such as "how to avoid the Omicron Virus disease pandemic". The second step is forming a team/small group. The team formed should not be too big, for example 5-7 people. It is recommended that team members come from different backgrounds, so that they can provide diverse information. If this team is a student in the same class, then before the discussion each group is given time to enrich their scientific background about the theme to be discussed. Students can read and analyze from various sources both online and offline. These learning resources should be in English. The third step is formulating questions. Discussion group members should ask a lot of questions about the issues being discussed. The questions that arise will sharpen the argument. Questions should start with the words "Why and How". Questions are meant to provoke dialectic and livelier discussion. All questions and answers are in English. The fourth step is the question process. The discussion is sharpened by questions, answers, rebuttals, and debates. All processions are carried out by using English. The fifth step is action taking. After a long discussion, the group then takes action to solve the problem according to the action plan. Finally, the sixth step is coach guidance. The trainer's role is to guide and direct various problems that arise so that focus and discussion orientation is achieved as expected.

ALS was invented and developed by Revans in England in the mid of 20th century. This strategy was originally used as a strategy for the professional development of staff in British companies. Then the strategy develops in the world of education and is used to increase the activeness of students in developing curiosity through the discussion process while looking for answers to the problems being discussed. This strategy relies on the strength of collaboration in analyzing and synthesizing as well as making decisions to carry out action plans. Revans (1980, 1982 & 1998) as cited in Ferkins & Fleming (2010) has conducted a series of studies related to this strategy by means of combining the

theoretical concepts of cooperative learning, integrated learning and learning by doing. A couple of researchers, such as Ferkins & Fleming (2010) and Pedler (2011), have continued to refine this strategy.

Studies related to this ALS have been carried out by researchers in Indonesia. Based on literature tracking, there are several researchers who have conducted studies, including Shalihah (2020) who conducted research with ALS to improve students' speaking skills at MTS Limbung with a classroom action research design. The results of the research showed that the students' speaking skills increased in each research cycle.

A similar study was also conducted by Putra *et al.* (2022) with the title "Action Learning Strategy to Enhance Students' Speaking Skill: A Classroom Action Research". The study involved 28 students with a classroom action research approach of 2 cycles. The final result of the study showed that the students' speaking skills from cycle to cycle increased. Another study was conducted by Nurjannah and Ruswiyani (2022) entitled "Using Action Strategy in Improving Speaking Skills in English Language Teaching". Their study was conducted in SMPN 3 Soromandi Kabupaten Bima, NTB involving 40 students as the samples. The results showed that Action Learning Strategy can improve the students' speaking skills in English language learning.

## METHOD

This research method is qualitative, and the research type is classroom action research. The Kemmis and McTaggart's (1990) model was adopted. Figure 2 depicts the classroom action research model used in this study.

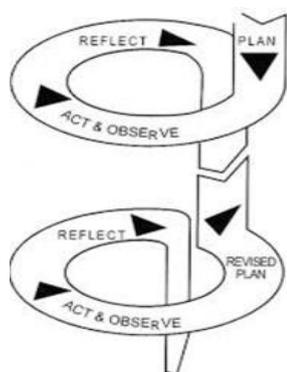


Figure 2. Kemmis and Mc Taggart's (1990) cycle model

This study was conducted in the conversation course of the English Education department at UNIB.

This study was carried out from the third week of June to the end of November 2022. The participants in this study were the third semester English Education students taking English conversation courses. There were 35 students enrolled in this course.

This study was conducted in two cycles. One cycle was made up of three meetings. Therefore, six face-to-face meetings were held. There were four phases of action research implemented in this study, in which they fell into planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In terms of planning, the researchers prepared learning instruments in the form of Semester Learning Plans (SLP) and learning devices, such as media, instruments, observation checklists and interview forms. Aside from that, the researchers designed and determined research schedules as well as indicators representing students' success in learning. These indicators were tailored to the Conversation course's learning outcomes and the speaking assessment rubric.

In the implementation, the researchers used ALS to carry out learning activities. The SLP was used as a guide in teaching by the researchers. Scenarios were developed in advance. Scenario changes could only be made at the implementation level, not at the strategy's core. According to a predetermined cycle, up to 6 SLP were prepared. In terms of observations, members of the research team acted as the observers, observing the learning process. The processes that occurred during the study were recorded by the observers as guided by the observation check list. The findings of the observations were used to improve the learning process in the following cycle. In terms of reflection, the fourth phase was reflection. The researchers and observers re-observed what had been done, what was being done, and what would be done during this phase. During the learning process, reflection was accomplished by checking, analyzing, synthesizing, and formulating problems. The findings of this reflection were then used to improve the learning process in the following cycle.

Data were gathered from field notes, observations, and interviews, as well as evaluations conducted by observers during the research process. This data could be used to determine whether there was an increase in each cycle. Observation sheets, speaking ability tests, and interviews were used as research instruments. Data analysis was divided into two categories: qualitative data from observations and interviews and quantitative data from speaking test results. In this study, success was defined as: (1) at least 75% (27 students) were actively participating in discussions at the end of the cycle; and (2) at least 60% of students received an 80 (A-) on the speaking test results at the end of the cycle.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this classroom action research showed that there was an increase in the ability or speaking skills of SI students in English education at FKIP UNIB by implementing an ALS. These results were obtained from two cycles and three instruments.

### *Cycle 1*

The data of cycle 1 were gathered from observation, interviews, and English-speaking test as to see students' English-speaking improvement. Table 1 presents the observation results of cycle 1.

**Table 1. Observation results of cycle 1**

No	Student asking	Student who answered	Student who are inactive
Cycle 1	12	10	13

The data were backed up by those garnered from interviews. After implementing the ALS, the researchers interviewed 10 students. Most students perceived that they were helped by the implementation of ALS.

The implementation of ALS was embodied in four steps which felt into planning, action, observation, and reflection. In terms of planning, planning was in accordance with the research scenario that had been prepared before taking action, namely providing alternative topics that were used as topics for group discussions consisting of 5 people. The first topic was "Talking about the weather". In terms of action, the implementation of the action in cycle 1 was in accordance with the steps of the ALS which consisted of six steps such as preparing problems, forming groups, compiling questions, questioning process, taking action and guiding the trainer (selected students). The researcher gave the students the freedom to choose their friends. Then, the students looked for one person for each group of students who had more qualified in speaking skills among group members. In terms of observation, the observer paid attention to the attitudes, behavior, and activeness of students in learning. At the first meeting, the students seemed quite enthusiastic about participating in the lesson because they were given information about ALS. This provided a clear framework so that the discussion went well. In terms of reflection, the results of the reflection from cycle 1 provided an overview to researchers and observers about several weaknesses that must be corrected in the next cycle. As a whole, the weaknesses that could

be seen from interview, observations, and test results demonstrated some points. First, students seemed less active during group discussion. This was due to the lack of distribution of active students in each group. Second, during the classical discussion, some students still lacked confidence. Third, the average value of the test in cycle 1 was 74. The score was the average of the three components of speaking assessment, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Table 2 presents the test results at the end of cycle 1.

**Table 2. Test score of cycle 1**

No	Students	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Fluency	Score
1	MGFD	70	70	70	70
2	JA	75	74	76	75
3	HF	75	78	72	75
4	GAN	75	80	80	78
5	SW	80	75	76	77
6	SF	75	70	71	72
7	ANH	65	64	66	65
8	MRS	75	75	78	76
9	IA	70	73	76	73
10	ANH	75	74	76	75
11	AND	74	76	75	75
12	DASBS	80	81	79	80
13	IV	75	74	76	75
14	AAR	75	78	75	76
15	SAAR	80	80	83	80
16	YO	75	74	76	75
17	DU	70	73	70	71
18	RJA	66	64	65	65
19	NP	77	75	73	75
20	SA	66	65	67	66
21	DDP	75	72	75	74
22	LA	77	80	88	78
23	JA	70	69	71	70
24	AC	80	76	78	78
25	RN	76	75	77	76
26	RA	78	77	79	78
27	ZAS	70	73	70	71
28	SP	77	70	72	73
29	SMZ	70	71	72	71
30	MD	76	78	74	76
31	OVTH	78	75	78	77
32	AN	75	78	75	76
33	AF	75	78	72	75
34	DRF	78	74	70	74
35	ARK	75	71	70	72
Average					74

### *Cycle 2*

In a similar way, the data of cycle 2 were generated from observations, interviews, and English-speaking test as to see students' English-speaking improvement. Table 3 presents the observation results of cycle 2.

**Table 3. Observation result of cycle 2**

No	Student asking	Student who answered	Student who are inactive
Cycle 2	15	17	3

The observation data were backed up by those garnered from interviews. After applying the ALS, the researchers interviewed 10 students.

Almost all students perceived that they got help from the implementation of this ALS which consisted of six steps.

In the same way as cycle 1, the implementation of ALS in cycle 2 was undertaken through four steps which felt into planning, action, observation, and reflection. In terms of planning, planning was in accordance with the research scenario that had been prepared before taking the action, namely determining the topic that was used for group discussions whose students consisted of 7 people. The second topic was "an afternoon in the kitchen". In terms of action, the implementation of the action in cycle 2 was in accordance with the steps of the ALS which consisted of six steps, such as preparing problems, forming groups, compiling questions, questioning process, taking action, and guiding the trainer (selected students). Here, the researchers determined who could be the leader and members of the group. The number of members of each group became larger, namely 6 people. This was done so that there could emerge more ideas and flexibility in larger groups before presentations in class groups. In terms of observation, at this stage, the observer paid attention to the attitudes, behavior and activeness of students in learning. At the second meeting, the students seemed very enthusiastic about taking lessons because they were already familiar with the steps of ALS. This gave a different spirit and experience from cycle 1. In terms of reflection, the results of the reflection from cycle 2 provided an overview to the researchers and observers that from the three existing instruments, namely observation, interviews and tests. It was known that the indicators set out in chapter 3 had been met, namely 75% of students were active in learning, and 60% of them got an 80 score. Table 4 presents the test results.

Table 4. *Test score of cycle 2*

No	Students	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Fluency	Score
1	MGFD	80	80	80	80
2	JA	71	69	70	70
3	HF	75	78	72	75
4	GAN	86	90	88	88
5	SW	80	85	81	82
6	SF	70	70	70	70
7	KNH	65	64	66	65
8	MRS	85	82	88	85
9	IA	70	73	76	73
10	ANH	90	88	86	88
11	AND	90	86	88	88
12	DASBS	78	80	80	80
13	IV	83	80	86	83
14	AAR	70	70	70	70
15	SAAR	90	88	92	90
16	YO	82	81	83	82
17	DU	70	70	70	70

18	RJA	80	85	75	80
19	NP	80	77	83	80
20	SA	72	68	70	70
21	DDP	78	77	85	80
22	LA	70	80	75	75
23	JA	71	69	70	70
24	AC	80	76	78	78
25	RN	83	85	87	85
26	RA	73	77	75	75
27	ZAS	90	88	83	87
28	SP	70	70	70	70
29	SMZ	75	76	75	75
30	MD	76	80	84	80
31	OVTH	76	85	79	80
32	AN	89	91	90	90
33	AF	80	78	82	80
34	DRF	78	82	80	80
35	ARK	80	80	80	80
Average					79

To be discussed, cycle 1 was carried out from August 29, 2022 to September 12, 2022. From the observations, it was seen that there was a change in students during discussion activities when compared to the two previous meetings which had not implemented the ALS (ALS). At the first meeting of cycle 1, students were given a topic entitled "Talking about the weather". After that, students were asked to sit in groups of 5 people. After that, the researchers chose one person for each group as the leader. In groups, they gathered and discussed questions for discussion or debate with other groups. After forming questions, the students tried to process questions by looking for answers to these questions. Here, students also practiced questions and answers to the questions they had made. At the end of the ALS step, students with the guidance of researchers (trainers) solved problems in the form of questions and answers in class discussions. Here, there was an argument against the questions and answers to the problems that had been made earlier.

From the activities above, it could be seen that students did not hesitate to express their ideas. This was proven by many of those who asked, and some tried to answer the question. This is in line with Shimamoto (2022) who highlighted that self-expression is a pillar of the communicative language classroom. This SI students of English education expressed their ideas in class discussions. They casually expressed their ideas in discussion.

After their discussion in large groups throughout the class, the roles of the trainers (researchers and collaborators) were to provide direction and opinions about the things discussed, namely "Talking about the weather". The group leader and members also improved their English pronunciation and grammar. Most students were still not right in pronouncing some words. The

accuracy of the use of some grammatical cases seemed to be problematic. They often did not correctly distinguish between verbal sentences and nominal sentences. These two tenses were often used in discussions on this topic because this topic talked about daily conversations among students in a country with four seasons.

In the previous discussion, the researchers and their members also discussed students' knowledge of the outside world, such as what temperature the snow appeared. Many of them answered correctly. They already understood the customs of subtropical countries. With existing knowledge or adequate background knowledge, the student became more confident in asking and answering questions. There was established a good collaboration among students. Along with this, Waluyo and Arsyad (2022) emphasized that students' cohesiveness has a significant effect.

After completing the implementation of this ALS (ALS), the researchers and their members conducted a speaking or conversation test. The results at the end of cycle 1 demonstrated that on average students got a score of 74. But some of them got a score of 75 to 80. This did not meet the research indicators that had been designed where 60% of students got a score of 80 (A-). This happened because the students were not used to discussing and the steps of this strategy. Lack of speaking skills in this cycle could also be caused by the lack of maximum work of the group leader. Here, the leader of the group was chosen at random. Awkwardness could occur in small group discussions so that they were less than optimal in their performance in larger groups.

Interviews conducted at the end of cycle 1 showed that some students had been helped by this strategy. This happened because according to them, these strategic steps made them comfortable talking to their friends. They were not afraid of speaking because they had been prepared in groups of questions and possible answers. They also discussed in groups by using English. This occurred in steps 3, 4 and 5 of the ALS (ALS) namely formulating questions, questioning processes and taking action.

Because the indicators of success from the data in cycle 1 had not been achieved, the researchers and their members continued to cycle 2. The results of the observations in cycle 2 showed a sharp increase in students' activities. Almost all of them actively asked questions both in group discussions and during class discussions led by the researchers. Because here before they sat in groups, they were told that each student must

have had one question. The others had to answer one question each. Here, there was a dependency between group members. They sought to collaborate with each other to generate questions. This collaboration also aimed to prevent the same questions to arise.

In cycle 2 which was carried out from September 19<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the students were also asked to sit in small groups of 6 people. Here, the number of them was added by one person so that they had more ideas in making questions and discussing the requested topic, namely "An afternoon in the Kitchen". This conversation took place between a mother and her child one afternoon. They talked about things that usually happened in the kitchen, which was about cakes. Cakes had become a hot topic in families from a background where bread was the main food. In this topic, students could also discuss a lot because they understood a lot about the types of text in English, and they also had direct experiences about the types of text discussed in the conversation earlier. This enhanced students' active during discussions. They had an idea of what to talk about. Their vocabulary came out by itself which could be helped by their friends in groups. From each group, there was selected one student who had less ability in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

The speaking test conducted at the end of cycle 2 showed significant progress. The distribution of values above 74 was more. Where, there were the scores of 80 to 90. There were 21 people or had met the designed success indicators, namely 60% of the number of English education undergraduate students, namely 35 people. Although there were still among them who got values of 65 to 73. Only a small percentage of them received the values below 74. The tendency for individuals' values increased from cycle 1 to cycle 2, but there were 2 or 3 students who still experienced a decrease in values. This could happen because the students were less focused and less active in group discussions.

From the results of the interviews at the end of this cycle, it was observed that almost all of the students perceived that they were helped by this ALS. They thought that group discussions were very helpful because they could argue casually without fear of being blamed or laughed at by friends because those in the group had weaknesses. They could also help each other in ideas and vocabulary. They practiced asking and answering in group conversations to become a place of practice before the big class discussion.

The results of the present study aligns with Putra *et al.* (2022) study. Their study involved 28 students with a Classroom Action Research approach of 2 cycles. The final result of the study showed that the students' speaking skills from cycle to cycle increased. This also happened in the research conducted in the conversation class 1B. In this study there was an increase in three things, namely students' activeness in speaking, speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency and students' perceptions of the application of this ALS.

It can be concluded that the application of ALS can improve the speaking ability of undergraduate students of English Education FKIP Bengkulu University.

## CONCLUSION

The classroom action research conducted in two cycles by applying the ALS in the Conversation course in semester 1 improves S1 students' speaking skills from English Education Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Bengkulu. This increase occurs because the six steps of this strategy flex the tension in the classroom where students are usually given a topic and then asked to speak directly. In this strategy, students are given time and opportunity to practice and prepare the right ideas, vocabularies, and grammar before discussing in front of the class or large group. They are helped by the existence of coaches or trainers in this case the researchers and their members as commentators or guiding and directing various problems that arise so that focus and discussion orientation are achieved properly. At the end of this study, there is an increase in terms of motivation or activity, ability and good perception of the application of ALS in terms of improving speaking skills in English.

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