

THESIS

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROBLEM-SOLVING
TASK AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPEAKING
PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS
AT SMAN 2 RAHA**

Written and Submitted by

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM
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HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY
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2021**

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As a partial fulfillment to achieve Master Degree

Program

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Written and Submitted by

SITI SALEHA MANAN

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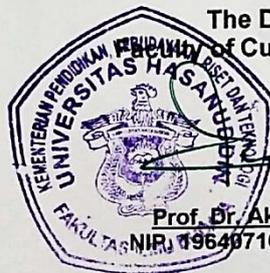
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States truthfully that this thesis is originally my work. If it is proven later that some part of this thesis is either plagiarized or the work of others, I am willing to accept any sanctions for my dishonesty.

Makassar, 30th November 2021



Siti Saleha Manan

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ABSTRACT

SITI SALEHA MANAN. *The Implementation of Problem-Solving Task and Its Effect on Speaking Proficiency of Students of State Senior High School (SMAN) 2 RAHA* (supervised by Abidin Pammu and Ria Rosdiana Jubhari).

The research aims: (1) to examine the implementation of the problem-solving task and its effect on the speaking proficiency; (2) to explore the students' perception about the implementation of the problem-solving task in improving their speaking proficiency at the State Senior High School (SMAN) 2 Raha.

A mix-method was employed on 25 students of 10 MIA 7 to verify the hypothesis. Data were collected through the speaking test, classroom observation checklist, and questionnaire. The data were analysed using the descriptive statistic, Wilcoxon's test, and the classroom observation was analysed qualitatively.

The research result indicates that: (1) the asymp sig. probability (2-tailed) is lower than 0.05 ($0.00 < 0.05$). It can be concluded that the speaking proficiency is significantly affected by the problem-solving task; (2) The students' perception on the problem-solving task is positive. Therefore, the implementation of problem-solving tasks should be taken into consideration when teaching speaking in the classroom.

Key words: Problem-solving task, Speaking Proficiency



ABSTRAK

SITI SALEHA MANAN. *Penerapan Tugas Pemecahan Masalah dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Kecakapan Berbicara Siswa SMAN 2 RAHA (dibimbing oleh Abidin Pammu dan Ria Rosdiana Jubhari).*

Penelitian ini bertujuan: (1) untuk menguji penerapan tugas pemecahan masalah dan pengaruhnya terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa; (2) untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa tentang penerapan tugas pemecahan masalah dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara mereka di SMAN 2 RAHA.

Metode penelitian campuran dilakukan pada 25 siswa dari kelas 10 MIA 7, SMAN 2 RAHA untuk menguji hipotesis. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes berbicara, daftar periksa observasi kelas, dan kuesioner. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji Wilcoxon, dan observasi kelas dianalisis secara kualitatif.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) probabilitas asymp sig. (2-tailed) lebih rendah dari 0,05 ($0,00 < 0,05$). Dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan berbicara secara signifikan dipengaruhi oleh tugas pemecahan masalah; (2) persepsi siswa terhadap tugas pemecahan masalah adalah positif. Oleh karena itu, penerapan tugas pemecahan masalah harus dipertimbangkan saat mengajar berbicara di kelas.

Kata kunci: Tugas Pemecahan Masalah, Kecakapan Berbicara



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English in Indonesian context provides opportunities to enhance professional credibility through participation in international meetings, forum, and partnership. In this respect, conducting research focusing on problem-solving task would be a potential technique to resolve the problem of students under performance in speaking. In fact, it has come to our attention that learners still face problems in learning English. Richards and Renandya (2002) pointed out that “it is difficult for EFL learners, especially adults, to speak the target language fluently and appropriately”. It means that due to the problematic issue, learners are unable to expose the target language especially speaking in terms of performing fluently and correctly.

In addition, it was burdensome for learners to have communicative skills properly, like native speakers. To be able to reach success in communication, one of the requirements is communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980 cited in Ting et al., 2010). Nowadays, the essential aspect of language knowledge is communication competence (Howatt & Smith, 2014). It means that communicative competence has to take into account in order to achieve learning successfully.

Problem-solving task has been practiced in different context of learning. As indicated by current studies that problem-solving as contextual learning model that should take into account as effective learning model that linking the learning material to the context of real-life situation. As a result, engaging student with the contextual model of learning will be affected to their achievement and creating the meaningful learning process. A Study by Bakhshizsdeh & Alaie (2017) conducted among intermediate-level of Iranian EFL students, which focus on investigate the effect of utilizing problem-solving tasks as an approach to teaching and learning the second language on the improvement of speaking skill. The finding of this study revealed that utilization of problem-solving tasks can really promote participants' ability in improving speaking proficiency. In the same way, Zainuddin & Hulu (2017) to find out whether problem-solving technique cannot improve students' speaking ability through problem-solving technique at the 1st group 2nd semester students of Ma'had Jami'ah Iain Padangsidimpuan. It revealed that the improvement of students 'achievement through problem-solving technique based on the finding.

In fact, based on the observation, the learning process in the school, teacher tends to used conventional way of learning. The learning process has not accommodated students to be more active in the learning process where learning activities are still too rigid; students only accept what the teacher gives without the opportunity for students to further

develop ideas and participate actively which causes students to be less in mastery of vocabulary and fluency in speaking. Thus, the process of learning showed teacher more active than the students like the whole activities decided based on the teacher without considering the students' needs especially in speaking. Moreover, students are expected various learning activities that can help them to improve their speaking skill. However, the lack of opportunity also causes learning activities to be too monotonous only to the extent that students carry out dialogue that has been determined by the teacher or based on the material in the book.

Another obstacle was the practice that was provided by the textbooks was not enough to support students in order to build their communication competence. Besides, there were limited number activities for improving speaking for example lack of activities that students can share their own idea regarding to the topic learning. As indicated by previous studies that the students needed provide more activities that provide them opportunities to exchange idea, share idea. The active exchange of ideas and supportive environment created by the students nurtured positive feelings that consequently increased their interests towards learning. For this reason, the problem-solving can provide student to share their idea, opinion or thought of topic they are learning. Through problem-solving, learners tend be more active and engage with the learning process.

Indeed, problem-solving has been introduced as an essential learning model by previous studies. A number of studies showed the problem-solving in teaching in different kind of context. However, relatively few of these studies show concrete evidence, how the implementation of problem-solving especially in Indonesia. Thus, in this study, involving problem-solving task in order to provide evidence of improving speaking proficiency

B. Research Questions

The research questions formulated as follow:

1. To what extent does the implementation of problem-solving task improve speaking proficiency at SMAN 2 RAHA?
2. How do students perceive the implementation of problem-solving task in improving their speaking proficiency at SMAN 2 RAHA?

C. Objectives of Study

The main objectives of study were:

1. To examine the implementation of problem-solving task and its effect on the speaking proficiency of student at SMAN 2 RAHA
2. To explore the students' perception about the implementation of problem-solving task in improving their speaking proficiency at SMAN 2 RAHA

D. Significances of Study

The present research expected to theoretically improve existing theories and previous research related to applying problem-solving task. In

addition, it was expected to contribute to new aspects for the establishment of future research in productive skills. In practice, the result contributed in-depth understanding for educators or education stakeholder to provide and create effective and various learning models in line with that concept of modern teaching that focus on students-centered learning. Indeed, the learning process made students actively express their thoughts and opinions develops critical thinking skills.

E. Limitation of Study

This study focused on using problem-solving task as a learning activity in teaching speaking. The following activity based on Byrne (1986: 94) introduced problem-solving activities as follow categorizing activity, planning activity, and grading activity.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Related Studies

There have been numerous studies to investigate problem-solving. Several theories have been proposed to study problem-solving in different kind of areas, some focusing on utilizing the problem-solving, others on the effect in students' achievement or performance and the effect of problem-solving. A series of recent studies have indicated that applying problem-solving can help teacher in improving students' achievement.

A study by Pranowo et al. (2018:9) entitle using problem-solving strategy in teaching speaking by using descriptive qualitative method. The result showed that the application of learning using strategic problem-solving shows good results and can be applied in teaching speaking and also it showed those students' abilities after the use of problem-solving strategies was in the good range. In contrast, Pavlikova's (2019) use of monologues, games and problem-solving activities for development of speaking skills with action research method which showed that majority of students have enjoyed learning activity using problem-solving. However, some students seemed too unsatisfied with problem-solving activity due to the fact that problem-solving takes lot of time and they feel frustrated by a difficult topic.

Other research findings reported the effect of problem-solving on many intended areas of students' performance and students'

achievement. For instance, a study by Damopolii et al. (2018) entitled “effect of problem-solving learning model on students’ achievement” by using quasi experimental study. The result showed that there is a difference in the improvement of students’ achievement, where the students who learn by using the problem-solving learning model higher the improvement of students’ achievement compared to the students who learn by using the conventional learning model. In the same way, Suparno et al. (2018) entitled applying the problem-solving method to improve student learning achievement in the concrete construction 1 course. The method used was classroom action research. It revealed that problem-solving method significantly improve the students learning achievement and developing the quality of instructional process for example changing the learning system from conventional way to modern way.

Another investigation on the effect of problem-solving to students’ performance and attitude was by Albay (2019) entitled “analyzing the effects of the problem-solving approach to the performance and attitude of first year university students”. This study was conducted to investigate the effects of problem-solving by using true experimental method. The result indicates that the problem-solving approach when applied to classroom instruction significantly improves understanding and performance and it can also promote a favorable attitude towards the subject. In the same way of finding, Behlol (2018) entitled “effectiveness of problem-solving method in teaching” by using quantitative method. The result showed that

the achievement level of students taught through problem-solving activity was significantly different as compared to the performance of the students taught through traditional methods of teaching. All those studies above indicate that the implementation of problem-solving brings positive changes to the modern learning process focus on students. Considering the positive effect, problem-solving is very important for teacher to be implement especially speaking class.

The existing research explore the interesting finding that problem-solving can be applied in improving language skills, especially speaking. A study by Bakhshizsdeh & Alaie (2017) entitles the effect of problem-solving tasks on the Iranian intermediate efl learners' speaking skill conducted among intermediate-level of Iranian EFL students. The method was used quasi experimental. The finding of this study revealed that utilization of problem-solving tasks can really promote participants' ability in improving speaking proficiency. Similar finding with Fadilah (2015) entitle teaching speaking skills using problem-solving activities: experimental research in speaking 1 at the first semester of IAIN Salatiga in the academic year of 2014/2015. The study was used qualitative method with one group pre-test post-test. The result showed that teaching speaking skill using problem-solving activities improved the students' speaking skills. In line with the result from questionnaire, it showed that problem-solving method was very good for teaching and learning process especially on speaking subject.

Problem-solving has been introduced as an essential learning model by previous studies. A number of studies showed the problem-solving in teaching in different kind of context. However, relatively few of these studies show concrete evidence, how the implementation of problem-solving focus on real-life topic especially in Indonesia. Even tough, real-life topic was indicated as the nature of problem-solving, few studies focus on exploring more in the implementation of problem-solving.

B. Theoretical Discussion

1. The Nature of Speaking

a. The Definition of Speaking

Nunan (1989) defined speaking as a communication process in which there is a process of conveying, expressing, providing information, and providing ideas, ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinions, and talking about perceptions using spoken words or sounds can be learned through the teaching and learning process. Therefore, creating a teaching speaking based on students' abilities and interests will make the teaching more interesting. In the same way, Brown (1994) said that speaking is a process of delivering and receiving information in an interactive way builds a meaning. In addition, Byrne (1997) explains that speaking is a communication process of two-way direction, namely between speaker and listener, which involves

productive skills and receptive skills. Widdowson (1996), speaking is a process both productive and receptive skills where productive skill refers to “saying,” while receptive skill refers to “listening.” In other words, what is produced and what is listened to. It can be concluded that speaking is a process of communication is a two-way direction, both listener and speaker, that engage productive and receptive skills.

Moreover, others existing studies in the broader literature have showed the large area of definition of speaking. Collie and Slater defined “speaking will encourage the development of fluency in spoken English. Speaking fluently, of course, involves speaking easily and appropriately with others but it carries a further assumption in simple term” (p.8). Harmer (2001) defines speaking as the ability in terms of fluency and accuracy which is the ability of understanding knowledge about the features of the language and also the ability to process information directly. It means that it is essential for the speaker to speak clearly and easily in order to understand the meaning and context.

In addition, Chastain in Castillo (2007) explains that speaking is a productive skill that has many essential components, such as considering the way of sound is produced correctly, choosing words, using appropriate

grammar. Furthermore, understanding the speaker's background is also an important component in speaking to create an opinion that will be spoken to the listener. Therefore, the assessment given by the listener itself is based on evaluation and analysis of the message conveyed.

b. The Component of Speaking

The speaking skill consist of several components. Hornbillis (2003) presents the following four aspects of speaking are vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. First, vocabulary plays an important role for supporting the speech. It is concerned with selecting the right and appropriate words. Concerning the second aspect is grammar, it is believed that the influence of seamless communication will be the role of grammar. As a result, speakers must be able to grasp and apply proper grammar when speaking. Third, speaking is an oral communication process in which both the speaker and the listener share information. As a result, it is critical to be able to communicate fluently. It means without any pause or hesitation. Lastly, the production of speech sounds is referred to as pronunciation. It is necessary for communication to take place. According to Kelly (2000), poor word pronunciation might cause issues.

In the same way, Harris (1974) presents the five aspects of speaking skill are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation fluency, and comprehension. First, grammar is a set of rules for making words meaningful so that they can be communicated in a comprehensible manner. It means that it is critical for students to use good grammar while constructing sentences. Second, the ability to utilize diction effectively is referred to as a vocabulary competence. Vocabulary limitations become an impediment when speaking, so it is necessary to extend one's vocabulary to facilitate the communication of ideas and concepts vocally or in writing. Third, the way words are uttered is referred to as pronunciation. It is necessary for speaking in order to be easily understood. Fourth, the condition in which a person speaks smoothly, readily, and expressively is referred to as fluency. Lastly, the ability to comprehend everything that is said is referred to as comprehension.

To conclude, the essential aspect that considers as the aspect of speaking skill is the grammar that refers the rule of form of word grammatically, vocabulary refers to use and choose the words appropriately, pronunciation refers the way how the word is spoken, fluency refers to the ability of produce the word properly, and comprehension refers to understanding

the context of language. All those components in speaking must be considered by the speaker to be a good speaker.

2. Speaking Proficiency

English Language proficiency refers to the ability that students have or learners in order to possess four skills in English Language. Also, English proficiency was based largely on language acquisition theory, which focused primarily on social language for example the ability to use English in social situations and the ability to communicate with teachers and peers (Albers et al., 2009). According to Folse (2006), using language means understanding the language to communicate through speech which is the most basic human communication tool. It means the way people knowing the language that is used for communication.

Stansfield (1992) has divided speaking proficiency into four levels are novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior. First, novice refers to the ability to speak and use words or phrases on a general level that are used on a regular basis are at this level. Beginners have trouble communicating in non-native languages at this level as well. Second level is intermediate, the speaker learns language in a reactive style, in which he or she is able to explain a topic using various sentences. Furthermore, it might be claimed that this level is the average level of speech. Third, advanced

refers to the speaker has mastered fluent speaking abilities and can communicate effectively in any context with anyone, including non-native speakers. Furthermore, at this level, the speaker is able to converse without encountering any difficulties in his speech. And lastly, this is the level at which the speaker can effectively participate in most formal and casual conversations about practical, social, professional, and abstract themes.

To conclude, the level of speaking proficiency as follow novice as the level of beginner where speaker have difficulties in communication. Second, intermediate as the average level of speech. The speakers are able to use the language. Third, advanced level means speaker uses the language fluently in different context. And last, superior, at this level, speaker can be participated in term of formal and informal conversation on vary situations.

3. Constructivism Theory and its relations with Problem-Solving

The basic of constructivism is that learners actively develop their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Doolittle, 1999). Moreover, constructivism recognizes the learner's active role in the personal creation of knowledge, the importance of experience (both personal and social) in this process, and the recognition that the knowledge created will vary in its degree of accuracy as an accurate representation of reality.

According Büyükduman & Şirin (2010), constructivism emphasizes the importance of the learner in constructing students' knowledge rather than relying on the teacher to do so. In addition, the main claim is that knowledge is shaped by human experience, interacting with the environment, making mistakes, and seeking answers. In constructivist, students focus on learning in the appropriate environment rather than directly teaching specific skills. The learning process focuses on active students in channeling ideas and a learning environment that supports the growth of pleasant feelings, increasing their enthusiasm for learning.

It is supported by Doolittle (1999) who mention the principles of constructivism theory: 1) Learning should take place in authentic and real-world environments; 2) Learning should involve social negotiation and mediation; 3) Content and skills should be made relevant to the learner; 4) Content and skills should be understood within the framework of the learner's prior knowledge; and 5) Teachers serve primarily as guides and facilitators of learning, not instructors.

In this theory, Vygotsky developed the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which states that there are categories of things that students can acquire with the help of others. Vygotsky in Albay (2019) defines ZPD as the difference

between the actual level of development as measured by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as demonstrated by problem-solving under adult guidance or in partnership with more capable peers. It means that communication and social interaction are more meaningful than independent work in terms of learning. It is where the concept of collaborative learning was born.

In relation to problem-solving, the concept of ZPD implies in the classroom situation where the student interacts with peers, and exchange their idea in order to develop communication competence. Here, the role of students as the centered of learning while the teacher only become the facilitator who guide the students and engage them in problem solving task. Problem solving expects the students to collaborative actively with their peers in exchanging their idea. As a result, this positive environment can build their communication competence.

4. Problem-solving Concept

a. Definition of Problem-solving

A large number of existing studies in the broader literature have showed the large area of definition problem-solving. Richard (2018) defines problem-solving as the process of applying the current situation to the new condition to acquire new knowledge. It means learners used their background

knowledge to solve the current problem. In the same way, problem-solving is a thinking process that is based on steps that contain scientific, clear, logical and systematic thinking (Townsend, as cited in Yanuarto, 2020). Also, based on Lila (as cited in Yanuarto, 2020), the use of problem as a learning strategy to help students acquire knowledge under investigation.

Generally, problem-solving aims to build critical thinking of learners, as indicated by Harmer (2001), Problem activities present problems to students whose activities are formed in groups, in pairs or alone. Problem-activity is carried out to find a solution to an existing problem. In this activity, students trying think critically and those is very important to build students' thinking skills in the target language. This will improve students' communicative skills competence.

b. Kind of Problem-solving Activity

There have been numerous studies that present various activities of problem-solving. These activities have used for EFL classroom, especially for improving speaking which employed by Byrne (1986:94) as follows linking, categorizing, grading, and planning activities. First, linking activity are activities in which students attempt to make visual or verbal links between two elements. Finding differences and

similarities can be a linking activity, such as students being asked to spot differences between two photos or compiling a list of similarities and differences concerning one location.

Concerning the second activity which is categorizing activity, students attempt to group items into categories. Everyday objects, for example, can be expensive, inexpensive, important, not significant, handcrafted, or imported goods. The students are then asked to classify the items using these criteria. Another example would be clothing. It means that student need to group the clothing based on season such as autumn, winter, summer or spring. Third, grading activities are those in which students attempt to compile a list of items based on a set of criteria. Consider a school subject. Students were asked to rate the difficulty of the subject on a scale of one to ten. Furthermore, the exercises can include determining priorities, such as having students create a priority-based list of items.

Lastly, planning activity refers to activities that students devised on their own. It could be arranging a picnic, holiday, or party, for example. In addition, students were advised to prepare holiday plans. Besides, it must decide on the time, what to do, where to go, and so on. To conclude, Byrne have present four kind of problem-solving activities that

can be used in teaching speaking. Those activities including linking activities where the students asked to make connection about something, next is categorizing activities where the students asked to put items based on categories, then is grading activities where the students asked to put a list of items based on criteria and another is planning activities where the students asked to design to do something like planning a holiday.

Following the problem-solving activities, in a book entitled "Keep Talking", Klippel (1984) presented problem-solving activities which the learner needs to find out the solution of each problem in term of individual, pair or groups. The following activities, the student, have to make a suggestion, opinion, reason, categorizing, and planning. For instance, Desert Island, in this following activity student is given an illustration that if they are abandoned on a desert island, the student needs to discuss some list of things that they need to be survived on a desert island. In addition, the student needs to explain the reasons for choosing those items.

Another example of activity is rescue. In this activity, student is given an illustration that if the earth is doomed. This world will be destroyed in two days, there are planes from outer space that come to help, but there are only 12 people who can

be saved and you as the committee in this rescue mission must choose the 12 people. Students must list the criteria that will be used to make decisions.

Similar to Byrne (1986), the activities encourage students to develop a discussion about the importance or relevance of a statement, idea or procedure. This activity encourages students to think about appropriate and relevant solutions. But unlike problem-solving activities presented by Klipper, problem-solving activities addressed the real matters that that happen around the students' lives, examples of current issues to make student engage in the learning process and increase the value and ideas relevant to the content area.

c. The Role of Problem-solving

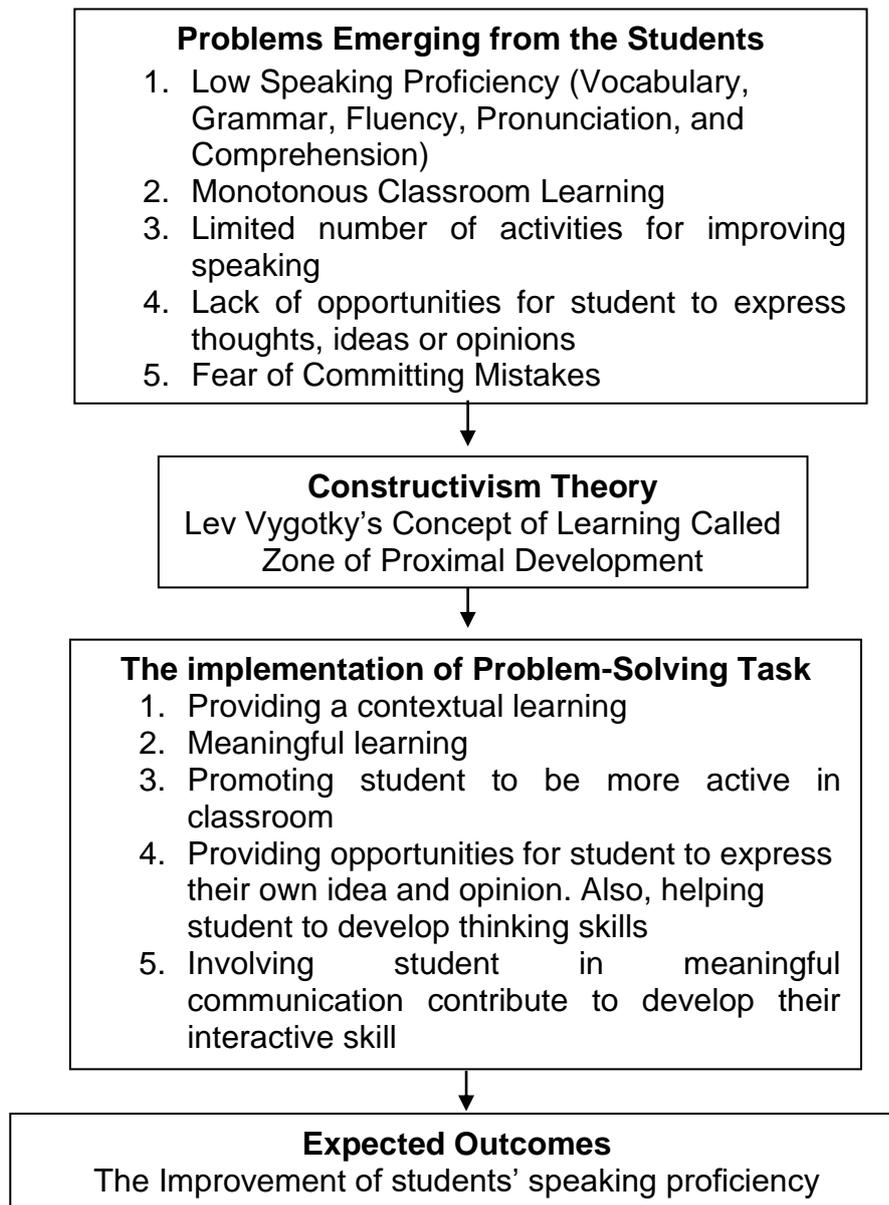
In learning context, Problem-solving activities play a role in dealing with problems and making quick decisions if learner may experience such situations in real life contexts. As indicated by Jonassen (2011) said that “problem-solving is generally regarded as the most important cognitive activity in everyday and professional contexts” (p. 353). It means the importance of knowing how the problem is solved and can be applied in several important situations. Moreover, existing EFL teaching should provide students with opportunities to solve

problems through learning activities based on oral and written communication skills. Activities carried out must also be carried out regularly so as to encourage the improvement of students' communication skills. This makes it important to carry out this kind of learning activity by teachers

C. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is explained below:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



D. Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study referred to the first point of research question. The hypotheses were as follow:

Ho: Speaking Proficiency was not significantly affected by Problem-Solving Task

Ha: Speaking Proficiency was significantly affected by Problem-Solving Task

The hypotheses statistics examined with the level of significance (0.05) with the decision making were Ho (Null Hypothesis) was accepted if the significant value was greater than 0.05. It can be concluded that speaking proficiency was not significantly affected by problem-solving task. In contrast, Ha (Alternative hypothesis) was accepted if the significant value was lower than 0.05. It can be concluded that speaking proficiency was significantly affected by problem-solving task.