

## Action Research: Student's Communication Skill through Peer Learning Method- (Regional Development - GMJT3124) Group B

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### Abstract:

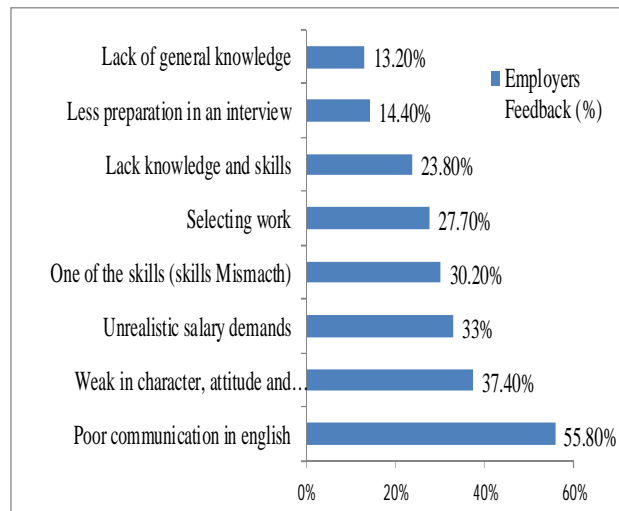
*The objective of this study is to enhance student's communication skill through peer learning method for subject of GMJT3124 Regional Development Group B. Most of the students are reluctant because they feel that they will have difficulties to understand and communicate in English that will lead to insecure and tentative feeling. They are unable to compete internationally because of communication problems did not reach the levels required by employers. If this issue still continuing, a fresh graduate from local university will face a difficulties to obtain jobs in the future. This shows that students more comfortable communicating in their mother tongue or introverted to change during their time in university. This study applied observation and survey method to get information. The results of a two-way Anova Statistical test (Anova) show that there are statistically significant differences between dependent (Student's Communication Skills) and independent variables (Student's Group, Feeling and Support). It shown that the students are preferred to improve their communication skills in English.*

**Key words:** Communication Skills, Peer-Learning, Foreign Students, Two-way Anova,

### 1. Introduction

Semester A152 is my first experience of teaching GMJT3124- Regional Development. In the class, I asked my students about the lecture been delivered in English. Most of the students are reluctant because they feel that they will have difficulties to understand and communicate in English that will lead to insecure and tentative feeling. As a lecturer, I have to abide the School of Government policy that every lecturer has to deliver the lecture in English for subject of 3000 code including Regional Development-GMJT3124. From this class, I found out the students are trying to avoid from communicate in English even for the simple sentence. I have been told that their previous course was not been lectured in English especially for subject of 1000 and 2000 code. Based on this statement, it indicated that the students are lack of confidence to communicate in English because this skill was not been polished in the early stages of their study in the university. In Malaysia, students spend almost 11 to 13 years in primary and secondary school learning English because this subject is compulsory (Govinda Samy and Latiff,2010; Salina et.al, 2015). Unfortunately, when they enter universities, a majority of the students are not able to communicate in English especially students from rural area.

The most significant problem among students is particularly communication skills in English when they were looking for a job. Furthermore, the issue of unemployment should be emphasized in the country where the unemployment rate is increasing. This is due to the weakness of the university students led many employers are reluctant to employ them even if they have good CGPA. This item is detected when many employers from various fields of complaining and dissatisfaction with graduates now because they are not skilled. This indicates that excel in their studies do not necessarily give the student a job if there is still loopholes of sot skills or Generic Student Attributes (GSA). They are unable to compete internationally because of communication problems did not reach the levels required by employers. If this issue still continuing, a fresh graduate from local university will face a difficulties to obtain jobs in the future. It shows that students more comfortable communicating in their mother tongue or introverted to change during their time in university. In addition, the attitude and personality also led to many new graduates are unemployed.



Source: Job street Malaysia

**Figure 1: Problems Faced by Employers in Hiring Fresh Graduate**

Here it can be said most fresh graduates' attitude was still the third class mentality because the first class graduates should have leadership, confidence, intellect and commitment (PSPTN, 2007). After I attended the first phase of 'Pensijilan', I would like to help my students to be confidence person. My first class, I have convinced my students with above figure (Figure 1) so that they can well prepare when they are looking for a job after graduation. The quality of students are very important so that they can meet the requirement or standard which required by employers. However student-centered learning (SCL) can reduce the problem of unemployment. Student-centered learning students are able to form personal maturity through the activities planned during the learning process (P & P) and should be continued (Noor, 2011). There are several descriptions that have been made on student-centered learning, which leads to a basic idea of the students. Student-centered learning activities are involving the interaction between lecturers and students. In this approach, the lecturer is not the main attraction, but the lecturer is part of the learning process or in other words as a facilitator. This approach is one that extends learning approach includes techniques such as exchanging experience active learning, solving problems that require critical and creative thinking, and engage students in role-play simulations, using self-paced and cooperative learning (Abdullah, 2004),

Through interaction of peer-to-peer and collaborative thinking, the lecturer can facilitate the students to gain more knowledge in class. By placing teachers closer to the level of their peers, knowledge and learning is enhanced and benefit students and the class as a whole. Therefore, I have applied 'Peers to peers Interaction Learning' in my class through work in pairs or group discussion. I must ensure that each group has multi-ethnic Malays, Chinese, Indians and even foreign student and they have to communicate in English. The groups also are permanently working together until the end of semester and strictly no any changes. I found that discussion groups can generate 'Soft skill' among students. There are many advantages when peer learning involves various races because students are given the opportunity to manage their own learning process.

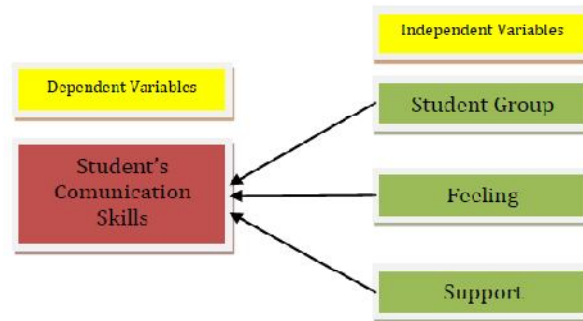
### **Objective of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to enhance student's communication skill through peer learning method for the student of Group B GMJT3124. This study aims to meet two specific objectives as follows:

1. To attract student of Group B GMJT3124 to communicate in English
2. To examine Peer Learning method is a good SCL method in the class of Group B GMJT3124.

### **Research Design**

In this study, the Group, Feeling and Support are the factors that contributed to the level of student's communication skills. In this case the Group, Feeling and Support are the independent variables whereas Communication Skills is the dependent variables can be illustrated diagrammatically as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Theoretical Framework**

### ***Research Hypothesis***

#### **Group**

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Group will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender and Group will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

#### **Feeling**

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Feeling will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender and Feeling will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

#### **Support**

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Feeling will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

H<sub>0</sub>= Gender and Support will have no significant effect on Student's Communication Skills.

### ***Research Questions***

In trying to enhance students' communication skills through peer learning method, some questions arise and should be addressed. Specifically, this study examines the following questions:

1. Does peer learning method will help the students to enhance their communication skills?
2. In what extent, activities in the class can increase the student's confident level?

### ***Methodology***

The observation and survey method were used in this study. Through the observation, I have recorded and watching students behavior without their knowledge. This method is very subjective and I can get more accurate information. The information obtained from this method relates to current issues and students willingness to respond. Another method is survey that involves the collection of information from the student by using predesigned questionnaire. This method is different to observation because it is structured method of data collection. I have distributed the questionnaire on week 12. The questionnaire consist 15 questions and 50 students have to answer honestly. This study runs Two-way ANOVA by comparing two variables.

### ***Results and Discussions***

Through the observation method, I found that students are enjoyed informal learning such as jigsaw puzzle, crossword and broken radio (Radio Buruk) rather than giving formal lecture all the time. They also feel free to communicate in English during the activities in the group especially in the groups that have foreign students.

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

Students who interact with foreign students be able to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem because they have no choice to communicate in their mother tongue language.

**FOREIGN STUDENTS**

During the class, I also being called by the students to confirm an arguments or seek help for better explanation. Some of them can communicate proper English, some do not. As a facilitator in the class, I have to clear misunderstanding or confusion.

**GROUP PRESENTATION**

During group presentation, I encouraged students to ask the question in English promptly after they heard presentation from other groups or give some comments. Each assignment has to be solved by cooperation and tolerance. If there are students who left behind, the other group members have to do something so that no one is left behind. For example, I will call student randomly to explain what have been discussed. If this student cannot explain the solution or issues discussed, the group's members are not entitle to get bonus mark.

**BROKEN RADIO ACTIVITY**



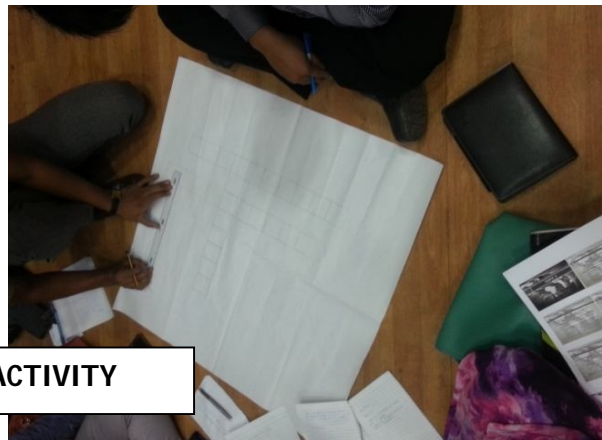
Most of students are trying to explain in English even though they are not very confident. As a facilitator, I encourage them to be positive and to give their best to improve themselves.

**CROSSWORD ACTIVITY**



Through my observation, GMJT3124 is not interesting subject and the students tend to get bored while studying and listening in class. I found that most students try hard to resist from going to sleep during class, but almost everyone has fallen asleep in class. Some students may end up doodling, sketching and daydreaming. Consequently, I made some interactive classroom activities such as Jigsaw, Crossword and Broken Radio in class.

**CROSSWORD ACTIVITY**



From this activity it shown that all students have participated in activities and they feel comfortable and confident to communicate with peers rather than instructor. Students learn through their participation in the achievement of knowledge by gathering information and processing it by solving problems and explain what they have found (Halizah and Zawawi, 2015). This activity provides students with the opportunity to deepen their learning by using concept and explaining new knowledge.



**Data analysis**

The results of the analysis are presented in the summary table below. Table 1 indicates the proportion of male and female students in the total sample size of 50. The absolute frequency indicating that there are 19 male and 31 females in the total sample with 38percent and 62 percent, respectively.

**Table 1: GENDER**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
Validfemale	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

By analyzing question ‘Do you have problem communicate in English?’ can obtain the group wise descriptive statistics with each of the variable given in Table 2. The SPSS output of group-wise descriptive statistics is shown below. This table indicates that 37 students have a problem communicate in English.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

CommSkill	Group	Feeling	support	
Strongly Agree	Mean	1.6250	1.8000	1.9375
	N	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	.19821	.38545	.54691
Somewhat Agree	Mean	2.3241	2.2966	2.2672
	N	29	29	29
	Std. Deviation	.37574	.31902	.40604
Somewhat Disagree	Mean	2.5538	2.5846	2.4038
	N	13	13	13
	Std. Deviation	.33817	.49303	.51578
Total	Mean	2.2720	2.2920	2.2500
	N	50	50	50
	Std. Deviation	.45313	.44851	.47380

The actual results of the two-way ANOVA have shown in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5. This result shows whether either of the two independent variables or their interaction is statistically significant.

**Table 3: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: CommSkill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12.200 <sup>a</sup>	16	.763	3.032	.003
Intercept	133.549	1	133.549	530.980	.000
GENDER	.016	1	.016	.063	.803
Group	8.875	8	1.109	4.411	.001
GENDER * Group	1.644	7	.235	.934	.494
Error	8.300	33	.252		
Total	241.000	50			
Corrected Total	20.500	49			

**a. R Squared = .595 (Adjusted R Squared = .399)**

The result in the Table 3 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in mean student Communication Skills between Gender ( $p = 0.803$ ), but there were statistically significant differences between Group ( $p < .0005$ ). Group and Gender interaction were no statistically significant on Communication Skills ( $p=0.494$ ).

**Table 4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: CommSkill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9.992 <sup>a</sup>	16	.624	1.961	.050
Intercept	131.159	1	131.159	411.889	.000
GENDER	.153	1	.153	.482	.492
Feeling	9.268	9	1.030	3.234	.006
GENDER * Feeling	.232	6	.039	.121	.993
Error	10.508	33	.318		
Total	241.000	50			
Corrected Total	20.500	49			

**a. R Squared = .487 (Adjusted R Squared = .239)**

The result in the Table 4 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in mean student communication skill between Gender ( $p = 0.492$ ), but there were statistically significant differences between Feeling ( $p < .0005$ ). Feeling and Gender interaction were no statistically significant on Communication Skills ( $p=0.993$ ).

**Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**  
Dependent Variable: CommSkill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9.278 <sup>a</sup>	14	.663	2.067	.041
Intercept	125.421	1	125.421	391.164	.000
GENDER	.051	1	.051	.160	.692
support	7.525	8	.941	2.934	.013
GENDER * support	.967	5	.193	.603	.698
Error	11.222	35	.321		
Total	241.000	50			
Corrected Total	20.500	49			

R Squared = .453 (Adjusted R Squared = .234)

The result in the Table 5 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in mean student Communication Skill between Gender ( $p = 0.692$ ), but there were statistically significant differences between Support ( $p < .0005$ ). Support and Gender interaction were no statistically significant on Communication Skills ( $p=0.993$ )

### **Implication**

Through Peer Learning method, students have shown their effort to communicate in English especially with foreign students. In addition, theory subject is not interesting course in university so as an instructor should create more attractive activities to get their fully attention and focus rather than give them lecture all the time. Through physical activities, students lack of time doodling, sketching and daydreaming.

### **Conclusions**

This study has proven that Peer Learning method is suitable to be applied in class of GMJT3124-Regional Development Group B especially when involving different races and foreign students. Furthermore, the instructor should encourage students to communicate in English even though they used grammatically-error sentences. The main discussion of this study is not only focus on development of communication skill but also to improve mutual respect, tolerance and teamwork. Furthermore, lecturer should very sensitive towards students' need and employment market demand. According to Abdullah (2004), a graduate who has academic excellence alone does not guarantee them a job because of intense competition in the job market today. Most employers today have put control of soft skills as a key factor in taking graduate work in addition to academic achievement. Most of the students of this group are likely more confident to communicate with peers rather than lecturer. This is not a big issue as long as learning target can be achieved.



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