

PICTURES FOR IMPROVING INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING COMPETENCE

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate whether to what extent pictures can improve students' speaking competence. It was carried out at SMAN in Cigugur for three months. The subject of the research was the students of SMAN in Cigugur in the academic year 2012/2013. The research method was classroom research and it was conducted in two cycles. The data was collected through interview, observation, diaries, document and test. The qualitative data were analyzed by using constant comparative method. While the quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistic to calculate the mean scores of pre-test, test, and post-test. The research findings show pictures can improve the students' speaking competence by indicating their speaking fluency, appropriate vocabularies, grammatical sentences, and good pronunciation. The advantages of pictures were also shown by the classroom situation, i.e.: during the speaking class the students can answer teacher's questions; the students had courage to express their idea freely; the speaking activities was not limited in the written way; and their attention in speaking class.

Keywords: *Speaking, pictures, students' competence*

INTRODUCTION

Of all languages, speaking competence plays necessary role in learning and understanding the language. Widowson (1978) says that speaking has two meanings. First, it refers to the manner in which language is manifested. Second, it refers to the manner in which language is realized in communication. To acquire of speaking skills of language, motivation is really needed (Finochiro 1976). Students come to study of foreign language in high school in strong convictions that "language" means "an instrument of communication". Students who are able to speak the language feel great sense of satisfaction and his attitude toward language learning is more enthusiastic.

According to Richard (1994: 182), the competence on listening and speaking deals with the skills sound of discrimination, extracting information,

and prediction, in order to specific functions. The skills also included those of determining and using register to suit different audiences, and for different purposes, so that students are able to fully participate in conversation and discussions. Based on Richard's (1994) idea, good speakers are ideally defined as those who speak nicely, efficiently, and articulately, as well as using effective voice projection. Furthermore, speaking is linked to success in life, as it occupies an important position both individually and socially. Therefore, speaking is the most common and important means of providing communication among human beings.

Based on the observation toward students of SMAN Cigugur, Kuningan, there are several problems arise the low ability in speaking which is indicated as follows: (1) the students encountered difficulties in using appropriate words

for their monologue; (2) students could not pronounce the English word well; (3) students had problems with their fluency, especially they experienced 'communication breakdown' in performing monologue and; (4) students produced ungrammatical sentences.

The classroom situation in speaking class showed that the atmosphere was not alive this situation was indicated by the following situations: (1) the students cannot answer teacher's questions. When the teacher asks questions to the students, they just smile and keep silent. (2) the students shy and unwilling to speak, they always avoid the speaking turn by pointing to others to speak. (3) the speaking practice was limited with many activities in the written form. (4) the students have difficulties to focus their attention on speaking class, they usually busy talking each other.

There are so many problems causing their difficulties in achieving speaking competency. Based on the interview, found some causes: Firstly, English language is considered as foreign language. Most of students think that they do not need to learn it further. Most of the students come from sub-urban and rural area, their parents' job are farmers, private sectors such as seller or businessman, and civil servants. Most of them do not continue their education to the higher level, only less than 50 percents who continue their study to the university. Secondly in teaching speaking, the teacher tended to teach text comprehension monotonously. For example, when teaching the teacher just explains the expression related to the topic while the students listen to the teacher's explanation, and takes a note. Then, the teacher will ask the students to look at the structure of dialogue which had been stated in packet book to read together after him. After that he asked the students to practice the dialogue in front of the class. This method will make

the student bored, because what they did only read and learn the dialogue by heart.

In this case, interest becomes crucial factor to consider in deciding teaching learning activities for the students. In other hand, teacher should be able to apply the right technique and approach which can increase students' interest in the learning process in the classroom. This means that the technique and approach used by the teacher in teaching English encourage the students to create an interesting atmosphere and enthusiastic learning process.

In teaching English, the teachers have to be able to make students participate in discussing the material actively, so they will not only be able to understand what they are learning in the class but also express their own English rally. The most important thing to carry out the English teaching is that the teachers have to be able to use appropriate approach, design and procedures. Here the teacher has very important role in managing and creating their class lively. Consequently, the class possibly chaos but it is enjoyable.

One of the techniques suggested for developing speaking competence is by using pictures in teaching speaking. Picture is a mean of expressing ideas, which captures slices of reality and tell language in a story. Pictures encourage students to think up clearly and telling the truth (Wittich and Charles 1953: 59). According to Gerngrose, Gunter and Puchta (1992: 3), teachers can use pictures in order to make communication in the foreign language class more lively, natural and stimulating. The activities focus on interaction in the classroom and combine learning language with practising social skill. Finally, experience has shown that more senses are involved in the learning process, the better memory works. With most learners, the visual sense is very important; as the saying a pictures is worth than thousand words.

Wittich and Charles (1979: 34) state that flat pictures have some unique advantages, they are: low cost and ready availability, meaning that it can be taken from magazine, newspaper, and advertising brochure. Secondly, pictures are easy to use. If they are large enough, they can be held up in front of a class. It can be used for a variety purposes. Third, pictures are easy to make. Both teacher and students can draw simple pictures or graphic or photograph.

He further states that picture can motivate the learners and focus the learner's mind on likely content and mood of the message. In addition, he states that picture might add extra information which allows the learner to infer what is intended but not clearly stated in the text. Finally, a picture is a valuable resource as it provides (1) a shared experience in the classroom, (2) a need for common language form to use in the classroom, (3) a variety of tasks, and (4) a focus of interest for student.

Pictures are more realistic to show the main problem if they compare with other media, they overcome the limitation of our observations since they clarify the problem and prevent misunderstanding. Every teacher can use pictures since they are cheap and easy to implement without some addition devices (Sadiman, 1986:31).

METHOD

This study applied an action research which is usually carried out by practitioners to improve their understanding of events, situations, and problems so as to increase the effectiveness of their practice. Action research is a way of reflecting on teaching done by systematically in collecting data on everyday practice and analyzing them in order to come to some decisions about what the future practice should be (Wallace, 1998: 4).

The research was applied to the

students of the second grade of SMAN in Cigugur, Kuningan in the academic year 2012/2013. The students have ability in English in general, but most of them have difficulty in speaking.

To collect the data, teacher's diary, students' interview and speaking test to get the students' speaking score. After collecting data from class action research, the data were analyzed by calculating the mean of the post test of the cycle 2. Then, the mean score resulted in the post test of the cycle 2 is compared with the mean score of the post test of cycle 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were two things that I wanted to compare between previous situation and Cycle 1. They were the mean of score that the student achieved and the process of teaching and learning that occurred in the classroom. The comparison among the students' score of preliminary research, the post score of Cycle 1, and the mean can be described in table 1.

Table 1. The comparison among the students' score of preliminary research

No	Explanation	Pre-test Scores	Test 1
1	The highest score	79.00	90.00
2	The Lowest student	40.00	55.00
3	The average scores	49.72	71.38

Furthermore, the comparison of average scores of each element of preliminary scores and the Test scores of Cycle 1 can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. The comparison of average scores of each element of speaking

No	Elements of Speaking	Pre-test	Post-test Scores
1	Fluency	12.23	16.80
2	Vocabulary	12.75	18.59
3	Grammar	12.69	18.58
4	Pronunciation	12.00	17.80

I also compare between the Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. They were the mean of score that the students achieved and the process of teaching occurred in the classroom. The comparison among the students' scores of the Test of Cycle 1 and the post-test of Cycle 2, and the mean are described in table 3.

Table 3. The comparison among the students' scores of the Test , and the Post-test

No	Elements of Speaking	Test 1	Post-test scores
1	Highest scores	90.00	92.00
2	Lowest scores	60.00	70.00
3	Average scores	70.00	79.87

From the table above, it can be concluded that here was improvement between the Test scores of Cycle 1 and the post test of Cycle 2.. Furthermore the comparisons of average of each elements of Test score and the post-score 2 can be seen in table 4.

No	Elements of Speaking	Test score	Post-test Score
1	Fluency	16.80	19.65
2	Vocabulary	18.59	20.45
3	Grammar	18.58	20.21
4	Pronunciation	17.80	19.53
Total		71.77	79.84

The students were successful in their learning because they were actively involved to participate in the teaching learning process in the classroom. The students' success of learning could not only be determined by themselves but also the role of teaching which was done by the teacher. Their success in learning English especially in speaking activity depends on he teacher's role in managing the class and using the teaching media in the classroom.

Pictures were media which can be used to develop the students' fluency, to promote interaction among students in the classroom, and to increase motivation to the students' learning.

In addition, teaching learning process could run more interactively and actively than the previous situation. The teacher gave opportunity to interact with other students and to develop their creativity. They had more time to learn and practice speaking. Being taught using pictures, the students could improve their fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, so they were confident and free to practice speaking. Teaching speaking by implementing pictures gave many benefits to the students.

The action research which implemented pictures in order to improve students' speaking competence has yielded some improvement on students' language competence in speaking and classroom situation. Based on the result of the research, it can be proposed a theory which says that pictures can improve students' speaking competence.

This finding is supported by the research result stated in pre-test and post-test 2, that the students' average scores of each element improved. The evidences of this action research are as follows:

- a. The students' fluency improved. The average score of fluency increased from 12.23 to 19.65.
- b. The students' vocabulary improved. The average score of vocabulary increased from 12.75 to 20.45
- c. The students' grammar improved. The average score of grammar increased from 12.69 to 20.21.
- d. The students' pronunciation the average score of pronunciation from 12.00 to 19.53.

The students could tell their story fluently, because by optimizing pictures, students' confidence will increase, because when they draw their pictures they construct a story based on their own mind. It is supported by Wittich and Charles (1953: 59) that picture is a means of expressing ideas, which captures slices of reality and tell language in a story. Pictures encourage students to think up and clearly and telling the truth. By using pictures also make the students speak naturally. Gerngrose, Gunter and Puchta (1992:3) confirm that the use of pictures are functional and beneficial to make communication in the foreign language class more lively, natural and stimulating. The activities focus on interaction in the classroom and combine learning language with practicing social skill. Finally, experience has shown that more senses are involved in the learning process, the better memory works. With most learners, the visual sense is very important; as the saying a picture is worth than thousand words.

Second theory being proposed says that implementing pictures in teaching activities can improve classroom situation. Pictures emphasize students' active learning. The students can do many activities in implementing pictures, such as (1) finding their source from the internet, (2) deciding story they will choose, (3) constructing their story based on their perception, (4) having freedom to determine how the story will be told, (5) choosing appropriate vocabularies based on their pictures, (6) understanding the content of the story, (5) sharing or discussing the phrases or sentences they had written in their notebook, in shorts, the students are actively involved in teaching and learning process.

The students also involved to avoid them from boredom, passiveness, laziness, and being sleepy because they can also share knowledge and experience

among the members of the groups when they draw and arrange their story. So, they do not only listen to what teacher says and write down on their book what teacher explains. Pictures can also improve students' motivation, as stated by Sudjana and Rivai (1997: 12) that using picture is effective teaching technique for the beginners. Since it can help the students in understanding the meaning and the content of the text.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the action research by implementing pictures to improve the students' speaking competence at SMAN 1 Cigugur, Kuningan, found that there was improvement of the students' speaking competence. The scores of all four elements of speaking competence that covered fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation increased well. It showed that the use of pictures in teaching speaking could improve the students' speaking ability for.

Furthermore, when the steps and the activities of implementing pictures were carried out in the speaking activities, teaching and learning process could run more lively and attractively. The classroom situation was also improved, the teacher did not dominate the class, but he gave more opportunity to the students to involve and active in his class activities. By implementing pictures in his class, the teacher tended to be facilitator. The teacher was always ready when the students faced difficulties. Being taught using pictures, the students were neither ashamed nor afraid of making mistakes in practicing speaking. They had courage when they were asked to do the task in front of the classroom, they did it. The students had been active too do exercise in groups. They did not talk to one another about their problem again. Furthermore, the students showed their interest in speaking class.

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