Improving The 8ᵍ Grade Student's Speaking Ability Using Pictures at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru

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Abstract

This research aimed to improve students' English-speaking ability using visual media with a descriptive quantitative approach. This approach enabled the researcher to measure students' fluency in speaking English. The research posed two questions: How can students' speaking ability be enhanced through teaching with pictures? And how do students feel about speaking instruction using pictures? The study focused on improving the speaking ability of 8ᵍ-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru. The research employed classroom action research (PTK) as the methodology, consisting of two cycles. The participants included 31 students, the teacher who conducted the teaching in the research, and the researcher as an observer. Data collection involved tests and questionnaires, yielding quantitative data with a descriptive approach. The researcher used a descriptive approach to measure students' fluency based on specific criteria, with values categorized as follows: 130 = very good, 91-130 = good, 51-90 = fair, and 0-50 = poor. In the first cycle, during the pre-test, only 7 out of 31 students scored "very good" or "good," while 24 students received "poor" scores, indicating a deficiency in fluency. Following the application of post-test 1 in the first cycle, all 31 students achieved "very good" scores (130). This suggests that using pictures as a teaching tool positively impacted students' fluency aspect.

Keywords: *Improving Students' Speaking Ability, Pictures*

INTRODUCTION

English is a global language commonly used by students and people worldwide. It is taught from kindergarten to university, being the most crucial foreign language for everyone to master. According to Susanto (2007), English plays a vital role as one of the international languages, facilitating communication among people from different countries. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language at all levels of schooling, from elementary to university, and is a major subject in Indonesian schools. In an educational context, English plays a crucial role in advancing science, technology, and various aspects, such as understanding English literature. Everyday communication in

English involves four essential skills that must be mastered: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with speaking being particularly important. The ability to speak is the ultimate goal of language learning, as highlighted by Henry Guntur (Tarigan 2008), who emphasizes the need for English teachers to play a crucial role in achieving learning goals.

When addressing students' ability to speak English, various aspects must be considered, as outlined by Brown (2001), including pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and vocabulary. For this research, the focus is on applying aspects of fluency to enhance students' English-speaking abilities. The researcher was motivated to conduct this study based on issues identified during a preliminary study of students' English-speaking abilities in class 8⁹. The researcher encountered these challenges during the PLP program for final-year students at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru, specifically in class 8⁹. To address the speaking problems faced by these students, the researcher proposed a solution involving the use of media pictures.

According to Richards (2009), fluency in language use occurs when a speaker engages in meaningful interactions, maintaining comprehensible and sustained communication despite limitations in communicative competence. Media pictures were deemed a suitable choice to improve students' English speaking fluency. They are easy to create and implement in the classroom, as supported by Yuyun Agustina, who emphasized the effectiveness of using pictures in teaching speaking.

Drawing comparisons with previous research, the researcher identified two relevant studies: Yunita Oktaria Zyam's (2019) "Improving Students' Speaking Ability Through Illustration Pictures at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Makassar" and Rizki Ambarwati's (2020) "Using Picture Cards as a Teaching Media to Improve Speaking Ability for Eleventh Grade Students: Classroom Action Research." The differences and similarities between these studies will be discussed in Chapter 2 in the section on previous research.

Improving the ability to speak English is crucial, and students need guidance during the learning process. As stated by Harmer (2003), the teacher plays the role of a "controller," responsible for managing ongoing teaching and learning activities in the classroom to achieve the aims and objectives of the learning process. This study aims to enhance students' speaking ability using pictures.

In addressing the purpose of teaching to improve students' speaking ability, it is observed that teaching speaking in real life is often guided by the natural approach or follows traditional methods. Many English teachers rarely utilize and optimize technological facilities such as internet videos. This conclusion is drawn from the average results of school monitoring, which involves both light and deep observations of the school. The research methodology used in this paper is classroom action research, conducted to collect data on 8⁹ grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru. This activity seeks to obtain data and information in response to two research questions: 1) How can students' speaking ability be improved through teaching using pictures? 2) How do students feel about teaching speaking using pictures?

Discussing pictures in this context involves a broad interpretation, encompassing various types and categories. The pictures referred to in this study are those related to the category of student understanding, meaning that specific pictures and objects are relevant

to the students' background knowledge. These pictures are categorized into three types: animals, fruits, and people, with about three examples selected for each category.

The researcher emphasizes the importance of understanding the types and categories of pictures in their usage for teaching processes, as suggested by Gagne (in Ian, 2008). Pictures, as media, should encompass various components in the student environment to stimulate learning. Additionally, Briggs (in Ian, 2008) argues that media are physical tools capable of generating messages and stimulating students to learn. Combining these notions, pictures serve as a medium of teaching, transformed into messages or information visually conveyed to students in a two-dimensional form, eliciting feelings and thoughts to encourage them to speak up.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Speaking

According to Fulcer, G. (2003), "Speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others." According to Cameron (2001), "Speaking is the active use of language to express meaning so that other people can make sense of them; therefore, the label of productive use of language can be applied to speaking." According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), speaking means to say words and use the voice to have a conversation with someone. According to Wilson (2013), "Speaking is the development of the relationship between the speaker and listener. The speaker and listener can't be separated."

Component of Speaking

According to Brown (2001), there are four aspects of speaking that student can pay attention to when speaking.

They are as follows:

a) Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the word delivered by the student with a sound that matches the student's pronunciation. Thornburg (2005) says that "it refers to the production of individual sounds, the appropriate word relationships and the use of stress and intonation to convey the intended meaning."

b) Grammar

Grammar is language that is spoken in a changing form, grammar refers to pronunciation that changes from time to time, grammar must also be pronounced clearly, because if not, then the grammar has words that are irregular according to the procedure of good and correct grammar. according to Harmer (2001) the grammar of a language is description how words can change form in language and combine them into sentences".

c) Fluency

fluency is an area related to students' English speaking abilities, because talking about fluency means it has something to do with students' speaking, because in research fluency can also be measured as an aspect to improve students' English speaking abilities, but

usually there are media that help encourage the fluency aspect so that students have the ability to speak English, therefore in this study the researcher used the fluency aspect which encourages media pictures to improve students' English speaking abilities.

According to David Nunan (2003) "Fluency is an area of language ability that is related to the speed and ease with which language learners acquire one of the four core language speaking skills, listening, reading and writing. Fluency refers to four language skills, but tend to be closely related to speaking.

 d) Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a collection of vocabulary that students pronounce as a language skill. According to Nation (2001) states that "vocabulary is the basis of language skills".

The Importance of Speaking

According to Boyd, as cited in Sari (2013), speaking is the act of conveying information from the speaker to the listener. Learning English holds significant importance in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Students are mandated to engage in English learning with a primary emphasis on fostering communication skills. In essence, students should establish a foundation for effective communication. Consequently, active participation in speaking activities during the learning process becomes imperative. Therefore, it can be concluded that learning English is of utmost significance for the enhancement of students' speaking abilities.

Teaching Speaking

According to Douglas Brown (2007), "showing or helping someone to learn by guiding and facilitating learning enables learners to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding the study of something, and providing knowledge, causing them to know and understand." According to Nigel Hardwood (2010), "speaking is a unique form of communication that is the basis of humans." There were several teacher directions observed during teaching, based on my experience at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru. These include:

1. The teacher explains the material while writing on the board and provides examples of the material taught to students.

2. The teacher presents material while asking students about their understanding of it. If there are students who do not understand, the teacher explains the material further.

3. Teachers always associate material with examples, facilitating easier understanding for students.

Definition of Media Pictures

Media pictures, according to Lisdayanti (2014), "are imitations of objects and scenery in terms of shape, appearance, and size relative to their environment, allowing them to be understood and enjoyed everywhere." This definition aligns with Yasa's opinion (2014), which explains that "media pictures are imitations of goods, animals, plants, and so on." The similarity between the two definitions lies in the idea that media pictures are imitations of scenes, objects, or items with a particular shape and form.

However, there are differences between the definitions provided by Lisdayanti and Yasa. Lisdayanti states that picture media has a size that is relatively adapted to its environment, enabling it to be understood and enjoyed everywhere. Meanwhile, according to Utami (2018), "media pictures are one of the most commonly used learning media and represent a universal language that can be understood and enjoyed everywhere." This indicates that the differences between the definitions of picture media according to Lisdayanti and Yasa are similar to the definitions of Utami and Lisdayanti.

The definition of picture media according to Superman (2020) is "media that is simple, two-dimensional in a non-transparent field, and can be developed in various forms through a combination of expressing words with pictures." This theory is supported by the theory of picture media according to Siregar (2017), stating that "picture media is anything that is manifested visually in a two-dimensional form as an expression of various thoughts, such as paintings, portraits, slides, and so on."

Characteristics of Media Pictures

According to Ropingatun (2017), the characteristics of image media include that the pictures must be adequate, meaning they are appropriate for teaching purposes. They must display ideas, parts of information, or a clear concept that supports the goals and needs of teaching. The characteristics of image media, according to Anas (2011), are that they can be understood and enjoyed everywhere, are concrete in nature, show more realistically, can overcome limitations of space and time, can overcome limitations of observation, can clarify a problem, and are cheap and easy to obtain.

According to Arsyad (2011), the characteristics of media pictures are that they are suitable for the age or ability level of the child, simple, meaning they do not need to be complex so that children get pictures that are suitable, realistic, like real objects or in accordance with what is drawn, and can be treated by hand, meaning that as a learning medium, images must be held or touched by children.

The Disadvantages of Media Pictures

The weaknesses of media pictures, according to Ambarwati (2017), were as follows: it was difficult for students to draw conclusions about lessons; it was challenging to find pictures that matched the subject matter; the time required for implementation was extensive; and additional manufacturing costs were necessary. Additionally, the weaknesses of media pictures were explained by Amir (2016) as follows: strengths and teacher explanations could lead to different interpretations based on each child's knowledge of the explained concepts. The understanding of the material was incomplete because media pictures only displayed sensory perceptions of the eye, which were not strong enough to engage the entire human personality, resulting in imperfect comprehension. The weaknesses of media pictures, according to Suparman (2010), included the following: pictures exerted only perceptual pressure on sight, were too complex for certain objects, and had a very limited size for large groups. This theory aligned with the weaknesses of media pictures according to Unsi (2014) and Hamdani (2011). The alignment was observed because the three theories shared the exact same three weak points of media pictures.

The Concept of Pictures

Pictures were learned media widely used by final-year students who prepared proposals/skripsi to apply media pictures as a tool for understanding the material being taught. The author deliberately used media pictures as a tool because the researcher wanted to improve students' speaking ability.

Each picture category can be interpreted as a process that will later be studied or followed up as media material to help students understand the material, therefore the researcher used three pictures as media during the learning process. The pictures were of People, Animals, and Fruit.

The Advantages of Using Pictures in Teaching Speaking

Gerlach and Elly (1980) state the advantages of using the picture as follows:

Pictures are inexpensive and widely available. Teachers can find pictures easily, for example in books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

1. Pictures were inexpensive and widely available. Teachers can find pictures easily, for example in books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

2. Pictures provide a common experience for the whole group of students. This means that by using pictures, the teacher can involve everyone in his class.

3. Pictures can help prevent misunderstandings. It means that by used pictures, the teacher can explain the new vocabulary to students easily, thus preventing misunderstandings between students' and teachers' perceptions.

4. Pictures helped students to focus on the subject and keep students active.

The function of describing pictures was to teach speaking was to practice describing things and use prepositions and positions, practicing listening and speaking with directions, exercising students' imagination, and retelling stories in speaking English.

The Implementation of Pictures

The implementation of pictures that will be used are :

1. The teacher gives a pre-test to students and in the test, some pictures were used to help give students ideas of what to say. On the test, the students were asked to fill in the blanks and some sentence starters to help the students start speaking, and the answers were provided in the box by the pictures. When the teacher was conducting the test, the researcher wrote every sentence the students said.

2. After that, the teacher finished giving the pre-test, then the teacher gave the students a post-test. This time, students were still given pictures but were not given sentence starters, students were asked to make their own sentences based on the examples given in the pre-test. and the researcher always played a role of writing every time the student spoke at the pre-test and post-test meeting. The researcher wrote down the words spoken repeatedly, how many times the student pauses when speaking, the number of words the student says, counts how many seconds the students spoke fluently and when they did not.

METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research, as defined by Arikunto (2006) as research activities conducted within the classroom setting. The research involved collaborative efforts between the teacher and researcher, with the researcher observing challenges faced by students during the teaching and learning process. In this classroom action research, the teacher utilized media pictures as a method to enhance students' English-speaking abilities. Each cycle, including cycle 1 and cycle 2, followed a four-step process:

planning, action, observation, and reflection. These steps aimed at finding solutions to improve students' speaking ability in English through the use of media pictures.

The study included two scales, pre-test, and post-test, to address the research questions. The pre-test spanned six sessions, while the post-test comprised a single session, resulting in a total of seven meetings. Both tests were supported by instruments, namely tests and questionnaires, to collect quantitative data. The data collected were quantitative in nature, involving numerical calculations of students' fluency in tests where they described media pictures, with the researcher using a stopwatch to measure the time.

According to Arikunto (2006), the quantitative descriptive research method aims to provide an objective picture or description of a situation using numbers for data collection, presentation, and results. This research adopted a descriptive nature, particularly in the test where students were required to describe pictures. The pictures were explained with the assistance of sentence starters listed in the pre-test questions, differentiating from the post-test where students described pictures without the aid of sentence starters.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Media pictures are used as a teaching strategy to help students improve their English-speaking ability

During the learning process, the researcher has discovered that media pictures can assist students in enhancing their English-speaking ability. This strategy proves to be quite effective in helping students construct sentences, as the teacher relies on pictures to motivate students to speak English. While some students may display laziness or engage in play, this does not significantly impact the overall learning environment. The teacher consistently directs students to actively participate in learning English, and any influence on student grades is mainly observed during the initial meeting when the teacher administers tests – serving as the baseline for the researcher's expectations in this study. To assess the outcomes of students' initial and final grades in this study, the formation of the post-test in cycle 1 indicates that all students have achieved the anticipated grades. This signifies the successful improvement of students' English speaking ability using media pictures and the effective application of this strategy in the study.

Student responses to the use of media pictures in teaching English to improve speaking ability

After completing the classroom action research, the researcher distributed questionnaires to assess how students perceive the use of media pictures in improving their English-speaking ability. Employing the Likert scale, 31 respondents successfully completed the questionnaires on August 15, 2023. Analyzing student responses, it was observed that among the 31 students, none selected "Strongly Disagree" or "Hesitant." The breakdown of responses is as follows: "Disagree" (6.4%), "Agree" (64.5%), and "Strongly Agree" (35.4%).

From the discussion above, the researcher can conclude that an increased use of media pictures contributes to the improvement of students' English-speaking ability. Examining both test results and student responses to the questionnaire, it is evident that the

implementation of media pictures fosters a positive learning environment. These pictures prove effective as a learning medium, empowering students to construct their own sentences and ultimately enhancing their English-speaking proficiency. Therefore, the researcher utilized effective strategies to assess students' English-speaking abilities.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and the discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that media pictures are an easily applicable method in the classroom, serving as teaching material that aids students in English speaking. Media pictures not only function as a means to enhance speaking skills but also assist students in formulating their own sentences. During cycle 1, both the pre-test and post-test displayed an improvement in score values. The addition of a post-test aimed at achieving the criteria score for students, intending not only to overcome initial difficulties but also to witness enhanced fluency and improved speaking abilities in the post-test. This signifies a noteworthy improvement in both speaking and writing skills among students, aligning with the objectives set forth in the application of media pictures within the classroom.

In this research, the term "achievement" pertains to the issue examined by the researcher, namely, the enhancement of English-speaking abilities. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Significance of The Study), the researcher addressed the speaking challenges faced by Class 89 junior high school students. These students served as subjects in the research, with SMP Negeri 1 Pulau-Pulau Aru being the object of investigation. The resolution of these challenges was facilitated through the application of media pictures.

Based on this research, the researcher offers several recommendations for teachers, future researchers, and students. This study suggests a valuable approach for English teachers. If the effectiveness of pictures in teaching speaking is evident, teachers can consider adopting a similar method to replace traditional approaches. Moreover, students are encouraged to enhance their speaking abilities, serving as role models for future success. The acquired knowledge can contribute significantly to improving English fluency. Lastly, Future researchers are advised to explore the application of media pictures in facilitating smooth student speaking. Additionally, they can consider experimenting with different types of pictures to enhance understanding, including local pictures that resonate with students and foster familiarity.

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