Improving English foreign language learners' speaking skill using picture series and story telling techniques

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Abstract - The goal of this research was to improve English Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skill using picture series and story-telling techniques. This research employed Classroom Action research (CAR) at the second grade students of a Private Junior High School in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. This Classroom action research was based on Kemmis and McTaggard design consisted of four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This research consisted of two cycles; each cycle consisted of several meetings. There were two success indicators that must be achieved: (1) More than or equal to 80% students were active in English teaching and learning process and (2) More than or equal to 80% students gained more than or equal to 70 in their speaking test. The result of cycle 1 indicated that less than 80% of the student achieved the success indicators. Thus, revised plan for cycle 2 was implemented. The results of cycle 2 indicated that more than 80% of the students achieved the success indicators. Therefore, the cycle was stopped and it can be concluded that the implementation of these two techniques in English teaching and learning process improved students' speaking skill, especially at the second grade students of Junior High school.

Keywords: speaking skill, picture series, and story-telling techniques.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning English is about teaching and learning the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Regarding with their used in daily activities, speaking becomes the most important skill that must be mastered. Without mastering this skill, we will not be able to express our ideas even in a simple conversation (O'Malley & Pierce: 1996). For example, nowadays, most of job vacancies and scholarships make English speaking mastery as one of their requirements that must be fulfilled beside of English test certificate such as TOEFL and IELTS. In this case, all of the candidates have to participate in an English interview.

Moreover, the need of English speaking mastery is also improved dealing with the tourism development, because soon or later this skill will be used more often in learners' daily activities. Even it can be used to earn more money.

In several years, West Nusa Tenggara has become one of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia. It can be seen from the number of tourists, either domestic or international,

spending their holiday in this province which always increases. For example, in 2015 and 2016, Statistics of Nusa Tenggara Barat Province reported that the number of tourist visits was increased from 2.210.527 to 3.094.437.

Unfortunately, the growth of tourist visits in West Nusa Tenggara is not in line with its learners' speaking ability achievement. English instruction in several Junior High Schools in Lombok, the most crowded island in West Nusa Tenggara, does not show satisfactory results. Many students cannot reach the goal of English teaching and learning. Although they have learned English for two or three years, they are still not be able to communicate in English, especially speaking. For example, they did know how to tell the direction to tourists who were looking for tourist destination. In this case, they usually know what they want to say but they do not know how to develop their ideas. Thus, this communication was usually done through 'sign languages'.

Based on the observation in the preliminary study conducted at a private junior high school in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara – on Sept 2018, it was found that there were many difficulties faced by the students in speaking English. For example, they were too afraid of making mistakes and being laughed by their friends. They were not confident to express and develop their idea due to their lack of vocabulary. Most of them speak in English very little even not at all. When they wanted to communicate with their teacher or friends, they preferred to use their first language or native language (Sasak) instead of English itself.

Then, some students did not participate actively during the class. The class participation was dominate by less than five student while the others speak very little or not at all. Some of them also were too busy with their own business, making some noise, disturbing their friends. Some of them even looked so sleepy during the class.

Furthermore, Classroom activities were mostly based on the students' worksheet. Teacher just explained about the materials, translated several words, gave written task, and asked the students to look for the meaning of new words in the dictionary. Dealing with the speaking's measurement, students were usually asked to practice a dialogue with their friends. In this case, students usually need some times to create a dialogue

with their friend. They were not confident enough to speak without making a draft. Unfortunately, most of the students usually preferred to read the dialogue than speak based. In fact, when I did an unstructured interview with some students, they told me that they wanted to become a tourist guide and others wanted to get work abroad. However, with their lack of English ability, especially speaking, they would get some difficulties while trying to reach their goals.

The use of modern teaching techniques or media such as video or internet are also difficult to be applied. This difficulty refers to the condition of the school. For example, there was only one LCD projector in this school. Thus, it must be used in return. Moreover, the instability of the electricity is also become another problem. We cannot predict whether tomorrow the electricity is on or off.

Thus, in order to solve the problems mentioned above, picture series and story-telling techniques were chosen as the solution. Picture series, according to Curtis and Bailey (2001), can stimulate students to talk by taking the focus off them and put them on the picture being discussed. It also can be used to help students to develop their idea about what they have to say. Meanwhile, story-telling is one of the speaking techniques which is usually used in teaching speaking skill. By using this technique, students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates (Kayi, 2006). This technique does not only foster creative thinking but also helps students express ideas sequently. Moreover, this technique also brings real life activity into the class. As we know that being a storyteller has become a part of our daily activity. Since picture series can help students to build their ideas and story-telling can bring real life situations in the class; hopefully, by using these techniques students will have more wide opportunities to speak English naturally. There the questions to be answered is how can picture series and story-telling techniques improve students' speaking skill at the second grade students of Junior High School?

II. METHODOLOGY

This research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on Kemmis and McTaggard (1990) design which consisted of four phases: planning, action, observation and reflection. It was conducted at a Private Junior High School in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The subjects of this research were 20 second grade students. There were two kinds of data were collected, qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected through observation and interview. Meanwhile, quantitative data were collected using pre-test and post-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Preliminary study

Before starting the cycle 1, the subjects of this research were observed and given a pre-test. The goal of this observation and pre-test was to find out students' speaking skill and active participation during English teaching and learning process before getting the action. Then, the result of

this pre-test and observation was compared to the result of the post-test and observation at each cycle.

The result of students' pre-test was described in Table 1.

TABLE I.   THE RESULT OF PRE-TEST

PRE-TEST	Score			
	<70	*%*	*≥ 70*	*%*
	16	80	4	20

Table 1 indicated that there were many students who has low speaking ability. Meanwhile, the result of the observation was described in Table 2.

TABLE II.   THE RESULT OF OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION	Score			
	Not Active	*%*	*Active*	*%*
	12	60	8	40

Based on table 2, it can be seen that most of the students are passive participant during the class. Participation during teaching and learning process was dominated by few students.

B. Cycle 1

Cycle 1 consisted of four meetings. In the planning phase, all of the lesson plans were prepared based on the syllabus and all of the problems found in the preliminary observation. In the action phase, the English teaching and learning activity using picture-series and story-telling techniques were implemented. It was done through Presentation, Practice and Production methods which is known as PPP methods. In presentation step, students were divided into some groups. Then, each group were given a set of different picture series. Each member of the groups was asked to present what they know about the picture series to other members of their group. In this case, teacher also give some explanations about information which might not be understood by students. Then, at the practice step, the students are asked to arrange the picture series in right order and create some sentences based on the picture. Each picture may consist of at least two sentences. Next, at production step, students are asked to be a story teller and tell the story based on picture series that have been given to them in front of the class. Other groups then gave their opinion about the story. The post-test was also delivered to the students at this step. However, it must be remembered that the post-test was given at the end of the cycle.

Next, in the observation phase, the English teaching and learning process was observed. The observation was done through observation check list, and vignette. Thus, the interaction and events happened were documented and reflected. In the last phase, reflection, all of the process of how English teaching and learning runs were reflected. The purpose of this reflection itself was to find out the weaknesses and strengths of the action which has been implemented. Then the result of the test and observation were also evaluated in this phase. After that, the result of this evaluation was used to determine whether there would be more cycles or not.

The result of the test at the first cycle was described in Table 2.

TABLE III.   THE RESULT OF POST-TEST 1

POST-TEST 1	Score			
	<70	*%*	*≥ 70*	*%*
	9	45	11	55

Table 3 indicates that there are still 11 or 55% of the subjects who gained more than or equal to 70 in their speaking test. It means that one of the success indicator was not achieved. Meanwhile, the result of the observation on the students' participation during English teaching and learning process was described in Table 3.

TABLE IV.   THE RESULT OF OBSERVATION 1

OBSERVA TION 1	Score			
	Not active	*%*	*Active*	*%*
	9	45	11	55

Based on the table 4 above, it can be indicated that there are many students who are not active during English teaching and learning process in cycle 1. Thus, in the reflection phase, it is concluded that the success indicator has not been achieved; so, the revised plan must be prepared.

The revised plan itself was prepared based on the problems or weaknesses found in the cycle 1. The problem itself refers to the participation which was still dominate by few students.

C. Cycle 2

This cycle consisted of three meetings. The phases in this cycle were similar to the previous one. The different was only refers to the planning phase. In this phase, the lesson plans were revised based on the syllabus and the problem found in the previous cycle. The problem itself refers to students' bad habits. While working in group which consist of many members, for example four or five members. Some members of the group usually were not responsible with their work. The smartest students in the group was asked to do the work. There was no group discussion. Thus, in this cycle 2, the member of group discussion were decreased. The students were not working in group with large member, but working in pair. Thus they could be more responsible and actively participate during the class. The next three phases, including action, observation and reflection were similar to the previous cycle.

The action phase also was done through three phase techniques, presentation, practice and production (PPP). In this case, the students were no longer working in group with large members, they were working in pairs.

In the observation phase, the result of students' post-test and active participation during teaching and learning process were observed.

The result of students' post-test as described in Table 5.

TABLE V.   THE RESULT OF POST-TEST 2

POST-TEST 2	Score			
	<70	*%*	*≥ 70*	*%*
	3	15	17	85

Table 5 indicates that there are more than 80% of the student gained more than or equal to 70 in their speaking test. In the other words, it can be said that one of the success indicator was achieved. Meanwhile the result of the observation at cycle 2 is described in Table 6.

TABLE VI.   THE RESULT OF OBSERVATION 2

OBSERVA TION 2	Score			
	Not active	*%*	*Active*	*%*
	1	5	19	85

Based on the table 6, it can be seen that there are more than 85% of the students who were active during English teaching and learning process. In other words it can be said that the second success indicator is also achieved. Because all of the success indicators were achieved, so the cycle 2 was stopped.

In the reflection phase of cycle 2, it is indicated that students' achievement improved from preliminary study, cycle 1 and cycle 2. That improvement can be seen in figure 7 and 8.
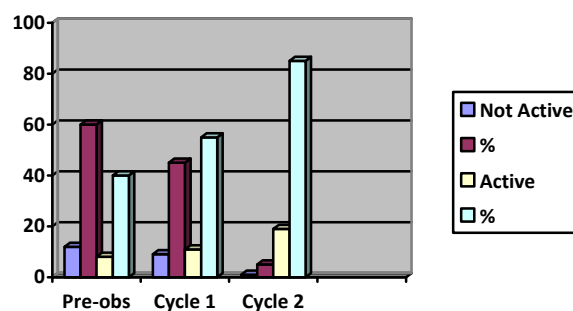

Fig. 1. The result of students' active participation during the class at preliminary study, cycle 1 and cycle 2.
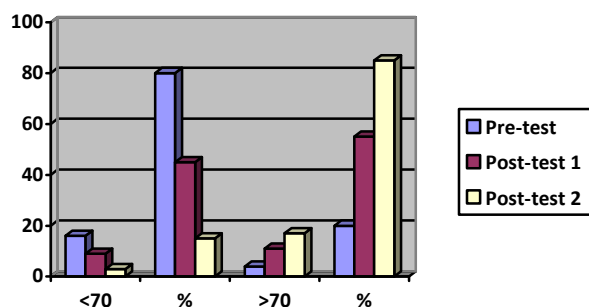
Fig. 2. The result of students' pre-test at preliminary study, cycle 1 and cycle
2.

Figure 1 and 2 indicate that students' achievement at preliminary study, cycle 1 and cycle 2 improve. The success indicators were also achieved. Thus, it does need to add more cycles. The research was stopped at cycle 2.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this research, it could be concluded that the use of picture series and story-telling techniques improves students' speaking skill. Picture series helped the students to express and develop their ideas. Meanwhile, story-telling brought real life activity into the class. Moreover, the implementation of these two techniques give students more opportunities to speak English.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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