

Pecha Kucha Technique in Developing Students' Speaking Skills of a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the lack of speaking ability of foreign students who have not been able to pronounce words accurately. The difficulty experienced by foreign students is caused by the desire to immediately end the speaking activities when they are given certain topics due to limited vocabulary. In addition, foreign students feel insecure in pronouncing words because of inaccuracies in pronunciation. To overcome this problem, speaking activities were managed by determining the topic and duration of speaking. This study used a descriptive method which aims to explain the use of *Pecha Kucha* technique as a medium for speaking skills for foreign students in *Berbicara III* course. The research data were obtained from learning activities at the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities, China. The results show that students' abilities improved after speaking simultaneously by using the *Pecha Kucha* technique. By means of this technique, students were encouraged to explain certain topics coherently and were trained to explain topics within a predetermined time. The *Pecha Kucha* technique allows students to be able to speak with a range of materials that is appropriate to the topic, clearly, straightforwardly, and on time. Speaking activities using the *Pecha Kucha* technique had made students skillful at speaking by not only being able to speak fluently but also being able to make students think systematically and explain topics in context. Students' abilities also improve when viewed in terms of vocabulary, coherence of sentence production, pronunciation accuracy, and use of vocabulary according to the context. In addition, the *Pecha Kucha* technique has increased students' focus and confidence.

Keywords: *Speaking, Pecha Kucha, Guangxi University for Nationalities*

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a form of communication that is most often done by humans. Among the four language skills, speaking is an effective form of communication to convey messages and is the most important skill required for communication (Zaremba, 2006). Speaking skills have the advantage of having the intonation, pauses, and expressions of language speakers so that the interpretation or meaning of the sentences spoken when speaking becomes clearer. The role of speaking in the world of communication is very important and can open up opportunities in various fields. For example, in the world of business and economy, speaking is an effective way to establish cooperation and trade. Likewise, in other work areas such as what motivators, speakers in training or counselling, presenters do; also in interviews, reportage, product presentations, and other specific areas (Osborn,

2008). Speaking or communication skills are also usually more prioritized in assessments than work experience and letters of recommendation as the criteria for recruiting employees in the world of work (Zaremba, 2006). Speaking skills are not innate. Speaking skills can be trained so that humans can gain mastery of them and have a positive impact on the development of their lives.

Various strategies are carried out by people to have good speaking skills. Some take public speaking classes, some practice by accepting an offer to become a presenter at an event for free, regularly read rhetoric books and practice in front of a mirror, and many other things are done to master speaking skills. *Pecha Kucha* is an alternative medium to improve speaking skills. *Pecha Kucha* is a short style of presentation for a large audience. Nowadays, *Pecha Kucha* is a popular presentation method and has become a trend in the world. In the academic world, *Pecha Kucha* has also been widely used

as an alternative medium for learning presentations for students. As has been done by Angelina in the research on learning to speak using the *Pecha Kucha* technique in the English Department, Sanata Dharma University for 46 students, the results of her research show that the use of *Pecha Kucha* has improved students' speaking skills in delivering presentations. The increase in the average score of students from before and after the use of *Pecha Kucha* is a strong evidence of the success of *Pecha Kucha* as an alternative learning medium for speaking. This was also reinforced by the results of interviews with two students who stated that *Pecha Kucha* had improved their speaking skills in giving effective presentations by paying attention to language use, delivery of speech messages, and interaction with audiences (Pink, 2007).

This research is not much different from the research conducted by Angelina, but there are differences in the way of presenting or preparing the *Pecha Kucha* technique. In this study, the *Pecha Kucha* technique was not carried out directly for 20 pictures provided that each image was explained for 20 seconds but was carried out gradually to anticipate students' difficulties if they had to do *Pecha Kucha* directly. In other words, the *Pecha Kucha* technique carried out in the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi Nationality University was adapted first and adjusted to the abilities and readiness of students. The results show that learning activities using *Pecha Kucha* could improve students' speaking skills and self-confidence. By means of *Pecha Kucha* technique students were trained to summarize information and present it effectively in limited time. Learning to speak became more fun and students' speaking skills also showed improvement.

2. METHOD

This study used a descriptive method that aims to describe the data according to the existing facts. The use of a descriptive method aims to describe the effectiveness of the *Pecha Kucha* technique in learning activities in *Berbicara III* course. The data of this research were taken from the application of *Pecha Kucha* in the learning activities of *Berbicara III* course, which is a 4-credit course in the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities. The research was conducted from September to October 2019 with the third-semester students as the research subjects.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The speaking course is a subject that must be contracted by students of the Indonesian Language Department at the Southeast Asian Language and Literature Faculty, Guangxi University for Nationalities, China. This course consists of three advanced courses, namely *Berbicara I*, *Berbicara II*, and *Berbicara III*. The

subject *Berbicara I* is contracted by students in semester I. The subject of *Berbicara II* is contracted in semester II. While *Berbicara III* is contracted in the third semester. Each semester has an emphasis on the achievement of students' speaking skills. In the *Berbicara I* course in semester 1, learning focuses on pronouncing the sounds of letters in Indonesian. In this semester students also practice short texts such as dialogue texts with the content of daily conversations. In the *Berbicara II* course, students practice speaking skills by using dialog texts containing specific topics related to culture and science. In the *Berbicara III* course, students are more focused on dialogue texts and monologues on culture, science, and public services. In *Berbicara III* course, students are trained to be able to explain certain topics spontaneously by providing a special topic during *Berbicara III* course. The topics are explained according to the students' abilities. At this stage, the lecturer provides input in the form of clarity of pronunciation, vocabulary, and inaccurate structure. Some students have shown good skills but some of them still have problems expressing sentences and have problems with pronunciation. Other than that, some students seemed bored with the repetitive technique and some students did not show significant improvement when speaking. This is because there are no demands or restrictions that force them to speak within a certain time with a thorough (detailed) explanation. To overcome this, an effort was made to train students' speaking skills using the *Pecha Kucha* technique.

The *Pecha Kucha* technique was chosen because this technique has the advantage of giving students the freedom to choose topics they like and master. In this way, students are trained to optimize their abilities without coercion, because topic selection is based on student's choices. In addition, students have enough time to prepare materials for discussion starting from selecting topics, selecting pictures, preparing picture explanations, and setting the time according to the explanation to be conveyed. *Pecha Kucha* was first introduced by architects named Mark Dytham and Astrid Klein. At that time, both of them lived in Tokyo. Both of them thought about presenting an explanation (in the form of a presentation) of the exhibition briefly to accommodate the many speakers who explained their work (Masters & Holland, 2012). *Pecha Kucha* is a speaking activity which uses slides as the media. *Pecha Kucha* requires people to explain one particular topic for 6 minutes 40 seconds for 20 images without texts. One image is described in 20 seconds. Twenty images are presented as slides and adjusted automatically for display on each image for 20 seconds. Therefore, the pictures will change automatically because the image change settings have been made every 20 seconds. This kind of presentation technique requires people to talk about important things that really need to be conveyed to the audience who listens to the explanation.

Pecha Kucha has its own format as described. This format is used in many countries and its peculiarities have made the *Pecha Kucha* popular. *Pecha Kucha* is carried out in various fields of science, such as medicine, science, social, art, education, and various other fields of science. *Pecha Kucha* has become popular because of its format and uniqueness that lies in the "chat" which is presented in the form of a short presentation that can accommodate many speakers. Even in some countries, *Pecha Kucha* has become a way of life and a necessity to share and talk with each other, as stated on its website: www.pecha-kucha.org. On the website, there is an agenda for *Pecha Kucha* presentations and several archives regarding the activities of the *Pecha Kucha* that have been carried out.

Pecha Kucha which was applied to the learning activities of students of the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities experienced an adaptation process. This is because when the *Pecha Kucha* technique was practiced with the standard format, students had difficulty explaining their presentation. The majority of students could only speak about 2-3 short sentences in 20 seconds without being able to explain in more detail and interestingly about the images displayed. Students were only able to express: "This image is ..." on each picture without being able to explain in detail. In addition, the explanation presented did not have a topic integrity. To overcome this difficulty, prior modifications were made to the standard *Pecha Kucha*. This was intended to overcome the difficulties of students in using *Pecha Kucha* as a medium for speaking skills as well as to train students to make presentations using the *Pecha Kucha* technique gradually. Modification of *Pecha Kucha* in *Berbicara III* course was carried so that students can get used to this system and do not cause them embarrassment if they feel that they fail to make a presentation which can adversely affect their mental and academic development in the future. In the implementation of *Pecha Kucha* at the Guangxi University for Nationalities, initially modifications were made in the number of images displayed with only 5 images and each image described within 50 seconds. For the first stage, students were given an example of a friend-themed explanation which must be presented in 4 minutes 20 seconds. This is based on the unstable ability of students and to anticipate students' difficulties when speaking. The *Pecha Kucha* technique applied to the learning activities of students of the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities is divided into four stages. In the first stage, students were asked to explain 5 pictures with the theme of Indonesian food, provided that one picture was explained within 50 seconds. Furthermore, it increased to 10 pictures with the theme of tourist attractions with an explanation of each image for 40 seconds. After that, an explanation of 15 pictures with the theme of a traditional performance was conducted with an explanation of each image for 30

seconds. Finally, the actual implementation of *Pecha Kucha* required students to explain the topic using 20 pictures with 20 seconds of explanation per picture. At the final stage of the *Pecha Kucha*, students were free to choose topics independently. In the first to third stages, topic selection was carried out to train students' level of focus. Meanwhile, in the fourth stage, students were free to choose topics they like and master. The four stages were carried out so that students' abilities can be trained, and students are ready and used to doing presentations using the *Pecha Kucha* technique. In the implementation technique, the lecturer informed the topic of speaking. Then students were asked to make a description of the topic. Furthermore, students were asked to look for an image that represents the description. This part is the most difficult part for the students because sometimes they do not find pictures that match the descriptions they have made. In the end they used the available images and reworked the description to fit the image and topic. Every image selected by students must be explained without looking at the text.

This method stimulates students' way of thinking so that they do not look for an easy way by just providing a different explanation for each image. This activity also prevents students from being reluctant to explore vocabulary and themes and only relies on the magic sentence in each picture by saying: "This picture describes ..." or "In this picture, ...". The presentation technique using the *Pecha Kucha* was done six times (three times for the modification stage and three times for the *Pecha Kucha* presentation).

The *Pecha Kucha* technique can help students grow self-confidence because students have to explain pictures in a short time without text in the image. This technique ensures students to not read the text and requires students to manage their time appropriately. By using this technique, students not only practice expressing ideas, but also practice systematically compiling explanations, compiling images into a series of explanations or specific topics, setting the tempo, focusing on the topic, and speaking with clear pronunciation and a loud voice. The *Pecha Kucha* presentation must be delivered within 6 minutes 40 seconds for 20 images. This means that the speaker must be very skilled at managing time, speaking in a straightforward, on target and concise manner, and have clarity of articulation even though it is delivered in a relatively short time. *Pecha Kucha* technique is effective for training students' speaking skills in prioritizing content to fit the topic. On the one hand, this technique makes students depressed in limited situations so that it has the potential to make students more anxious due to time constraints (Colombia, 2017). On the other hand, this technique is able to optimize students' speaking skills, bring pedagogical implications, and stimulate the expression of creativity to get around the time constraints (Zhang, 2009). This technique does not allow students to repeat incomplete explanations because if this is done,

students will be overwhelmed to explain the next picture because the time is running, and the pictures change automatically.

The *Pecha Kucha* technique is able to consistently improve students' speaking skills. When speaking, students focused more on the audience not on slides, and did not read the texts on the slides and notes. In addition, this technique is also useful for other students who are in the audience because the explanation is presented in a short time in a clear and concise manner. This also prevents students from chatting with their friends because it focuses on short and interesting explanations. In implementing *Pecha Kucha*, there are things that must be done by students who have not yet had their turn to speak, namely taking notes on important information conveyed by other students who are presenting *Pecha Kucha*. This is done so that other students focus and are not busy preparing themselves by memorizing while waiting for their turn. This method not only trains students to listen, but also makes students who were speaking not lose the attention of their friends and fosters mutual respect. Practicing speaking skills by using the *Pecha Kucha* technique helps students in making digest of the description they want to convey. That way, students are also trained to extract the information they get in a relatively short time. For students of the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities, the *Pecha Kucha* technique helps improve speaking and presentation skills in Indonesian. As a second language, the use of Indonesian must be practiced and used continuously because students do not have many opportunities to use Indonesian during their studies. Even though students are majoring in Indonesian, during the learning process in the classroom, students often use Mandarin with their friends and even the lectures with local lecturers are delivered in Mandarin, even though the students are already at a high level and have previously studied in Indonesia for one year. Consequently, the opportunity to frequently use the Indonesian language is very limited and can only be done with lecturers who are Indonesian citizens. Students learning a second language usually have limited opportunities to speak the target language outside the classroom (Boonkit, 2010). This limitation can be overcome by lecturers by making various interesting activities, such as talking clubs. Through speaking club activities, lecturers facilitate students in providing more situations that involve speaking activities to strengthen students' speaking competence (Durer, 2013). Speaking clubs can be an alternative to improving speaking skills as well as a solution to obstacles related to student opportunities to use the target language.

Emphasis of achievement from the application of *Pecha Kucha* to the learning of students of the Indonesian Language Department, School of Southeast Asian Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities is the

clarity of pronunciation and loudness of voice, knowledge of vocabulary, coherence of topics and explanations, and interaction with audience. Pronunciations and loudness of voice are the most important parts in the Bahasa III course because students must be able to pronounce the sound of letters correctly with a loud voice. Some students did not speak aloud because they were unsure of their pronunciation, so they chose to lower their voice so that the pronunciation error was barely audible. Even so, the mouth opening when pronouncing certain letter sounds will be seen and will be identified in the context and meaning of the sentences it produces. Vocabulary knowledge is related to understanding and mastering the vocabulary that has been learned. This will also relate to its use in sentences that are in accordance with the context or meaning of the sentence. The vocabulary knowledge section will also relate to how students connect one image to the next. This is related to the skills and variations of the connecting sentences it produces. The coherence section deals with topics of discussion that must be appropriate. This section needs to have more attention to make students stay focused on explaining the topic and not discussing things that are not related to the topic. This section is closely related to the way students extract the information they get. The last part is interaction with the audience. In learning to speak, the audience is a speech partner whose attention should not be neglected. The speaker must make an effort and be able to attract the attention of the audience, as well as be able to interact with the audience through his explanation. This section trains students to be able to increase self-confidence when it comes to speaking in public and being witnessed by many people.

4. CONCLUSION

Various types of activities and authentic materials can be used to attract foreign language learners and create a positive learning environment and have an impact on their attitudes towards learning (Ocak, 2010). Speaking activities using the *Pecha Kucha* technique is one way of fostering a positive attitude in learning foreign languages. Speaking activities using the *Pecha Kucha* technique train students to speak not only using dialogue texts but also monologue texts within a specified time. *Pecha Kucha* encourages students to be more active and independent in preparing the materials for speaking activities because students cannot depend on their friends. Although each student is tasked with explaining the same topic, different content allows them not to cooperate or rely on their friends. *Pecha Kucha* not only trains students' productive skills through speaking activities but also increases students' self-confidence which has an impact on positive mental development. Activities that involve language skills activities using the *Pecha Kucha* technique are very good to be applied in classroom communication effectively (Saidalvi, 2012). Speaking clubs train foreign language learners to speak in public because they have the

value of flexibility, having an impact on pedagogical, social, and environmental aspects.

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