



***Direct Method* Impact on the Students' Speaking Ability: A Case of Non-English Department Students of Semarang University**

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Abstract. This research investigates the implementation of the *Direct Method* in English language learning, particularly in improving students' speaking ability. The research method used is classroom action research (CAR) in which the researchers apply two cycles. In each cycle, the researchers apply four stages, planning, taking action, observing, and reflecting. First, planning is used as a preparation before the method is implemented. Next is taking action, which means the *Direct Method* is implemented in the classroom. Third, the researchers observe how the *Direct Method* is being applied, and the last is the reflecting stage in which the researchers reflect all the research processes after the method is conducted. This cycle is repeated in the second cycle. The result shows that the *Direct Method* positively impacts the students' speaking ability. Most of the students have actively participated in the class activity. Moreover, students looked motivated to improve their speaking ability by having plenty of discussions and cooperation with their fellow students.

Keywords: direct method; impact; speaking ability; CAR

1 Introduction

Teaching English in Indonesia is challenging. In this country, English has become a foreign language that is not spoken in daily life, surprisingly it is studied continuously in school and college. In addition, Indonesian students study English for obligatory purposes such as, in most cases, to accomplish a study. For example, most Indonesian students from elementary to college are familiar with English yet are not fluent in producing English, both

writing and speaking. As we can see from this example they are learning English just as obligatory to finish their study since it is included in a school curriculum. Unluckily, they may not realize that mastering English can open a wide range of career opportunities in the future.

However, not only do the students deal with the challenge but also the teacher. Teaching English as a foreign language involves a complex process for the teacher. The complexity starts from preparing the teaching material to motivating the students to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. Students are usually passive in English class as they do not feel confident, so they do need to be encouraged to participate in the learning process. The teacher should prepare a strategy and teaching method that attract students' attention and make them participate actively in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the teacher should create a student-centered learning situation to attain a real and active learning experience that lasts in the students' memory and helps them understand the material.

The most challenging task in teaching English as a foreign language is to decide what teaching method fits the learners well. Efforts to teach speaking and writing, which are productive skills are greater than teaching reading and listening which are receptive skills. Therefore, teachers should adopt effective teaching methods taught in their classrooms (Khalil, 2020). Many teaching methods in English offer activities that engage students' attention or make them active in class, such as total physical response (TPR), communicative language teaching (CLT), direct method, and so on. In this research, the researchers apply a direct method to teach English to law students at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Semarang. English in this faculty is English for Specific Purposes or ESP since the students study law-related English; furthermore, why this method is applied in the classroom because the researchers feel that it can trigger the students to actively participate in classroom activities such as speaking, writing, and discussion. In addition, the direct method was conducted in several previous studies and showed that this method was well-implemented in a classroom, especially to improve students' speaking ability.^[1] The direct or natural method encouraged students to communicate with their classmates by exchanging or sharing information without using their native language. Moreover, to enhance students' speaking ability the direct method does not provide a translation into the native language.^[2] Another experimental research showed that the direct method was more effective for teaching spoken English than the traditional method such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). GTM (Grammar-Translation Method) is widely used in Indonesia. This method focuses on studying grammar through reading passages and understanding English words or phrases by translating them into their native language. As a result, students are lacking of speaking practice in English class.

This research aims to investigate whether or not the direct method can be well-implemented in English classes, especially for college students in non-English study programs with different background knowledge in English. The material taught is law-related English, the ESP material since the students come from the Faculty of Law, Universitas Semarang. The research focuses on enhancing students' speaking ability because fluent English is now in high demand in working situations. Moreover, through the direct method, the researchers are eager to find out if this method fits well in a college

situation since many previous studies implemented this method in elementary or secondary school contexts, specifically schools in Indonesia. [3] [4] [5].

2 Method

2.1 Classroom Action Research (CAR)

This research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). [6] Action research is a systemic approach to finding out or investigating that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they deal with in their daily lives. In addition, [7] Classroom action research is designed to enhance the quality of learning in the classroom. Classroom action research is done in the school by the teacher to overcome the issues faced by both the teacher and the student. Initially, the teacher herself acts as the researcher in Classroom Action Research (CAR), and she can team up with collaborators.

Classroom action research involves stages of implementation. It is called a cycle, and iterative research. The cycle in action research is shown in Figure 1 below:

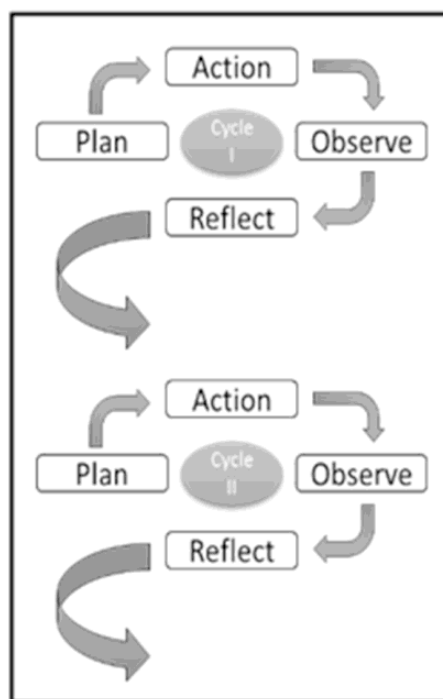


FIGURE 1 [8] Action research cycle by Kemmis and Taggart model

The model includes four steps in each cycle, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In this research, Kemmis and Taggart's cycle was applied and applied two cycles. First planning is the initial step to be prepared. Planning is based on the issues the teacher

experienced in her teaching and learning process. When the teacher has decided on parts she wants to solve or to improve, she starts designing the planning she needs to be prepared. All the preparations are included in the planning process. Second, acting is conducted in which the teacher carries out treatment to be applied in her classroom. The treatment is adjusted to the students' best needs. In this research, the treatment used by the teacher is the Direct Method which aims to improve students' speaking ability. Third, observing is the next step. In this step, teachers and collaborators work together observing the classroom activities. Observation tools used in this research include the observation sheet, journal, speaking rubric, and interview sheet. Fourth, the last step is reflecting. The reflecting step is essential as it becomes a stepping stone to conduct the next cycle. In this step, the teacher, collaborator, and student may reflect on the overall process of teaching and learning activities using the direct method. They will reflect together by sharing all the processes they experienced during the classroom activities such as identifying the drawbacks of the teaching method so that the researchers can improve the way the methods will be conducted in the next cycle. In the next cycle, cycle 2, the steps are implemented similarly to the previous cycle. The discrepancies are shown in the acting step because the result of the reflection step in cycle 1 should be improved.

This research took place in an English for Law class at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Semarang consisting of 30 students who taught using the Direct method to assess their speaking ability. The speaking ability was based on David P. Harris's speaking rubric. The research focuses on the students' improvement in speaking ability through teaching media such as videos and pictures. Moreover, this is a descriptive qualitative research as the data was gathered through field notes, journals, and interviews. Then the data was interpreted descriptively.

3 Result And Discussion

3.1 Cycle 1

Starting cycle 1 by giving a pretest to the student. The pretest aims to investigate the students' preliminary speaking ability. It was an oral pretest. Utilizing pictures and videos helps the researchers conduct the oral pretest. The students involved in this stage are 30 students. In addition, the material taught was *people-in-law* themes. *People in Law* discusses people who have a legal profession and are involved in legal procedures. The Figure 2 is shown below:



FIGURE 2 Picture of Jury in a Trial (<https://www.cityoffircrest.net/court/jury-duty/>)

The pretest was a part of the planning stage. The pictures were shown to the students and they had to try to speak their opinion about the pictures and then answer the questions. The questions were used to trigger them to express their point of view. After the pretest was done. The stage moved to the acting stage in which the researchers gave treatments to the students to encourage them to be more active in the teaching and learning process. A video taken from the film "Law and Order" is shown in Figure 3.

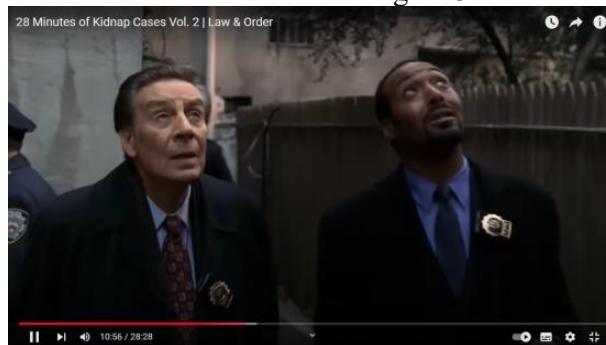


FIGURE 3 Law and Order Serial
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VUGaesO8vI>)

In this acting stage, by showing the movie, the students were able to see the actual scene in which a crime was taken place, they were able to explore more vocabulary and speak more sentences based on the movie they saw. They seemed more confident. Since the grammar was taught inductively in the direct method some corrections were made by the teacher or fellow students, yet it did not make them uncomfortable learning the grammar. The correction was uttered directly so students did not feel judged because of incorrect grammar. They seemed to enjoy it by repeating the correct grammatical structure. All of the activities were observed meticulously. After the observation, it was time for a reflection. The reflection stage showed that students needed more explanation about the activities

involved as these activities were not usual. So, in the next cycle, the researcher with the teacher gave more clear instructions to the students.

The pretest and post test results in cycle 1 are shown in Figure 4 below:

ASPECT	CYCLE 1 (%)	
	Pretest	Post-test
Mean	56,13333	64,66667
Students who pass the minimal score (b)	16,66667	33,33333

FIGURE 4 The result of cycle 1

The table shows that in cycle 1 the number of students who passed the minimal score in the pretest which is 70 (B) is 16,66667% or based on the data from 30 students only 5 students achieved the minimal score. However, when the post-test was completed, it showed that the improvement was presented. The number of students who passed the post-test is 33,33333% so the students who passed the test increased to 10. This finding was not satisfied. The mean score in cycle 1 shows an improvement from 56,13333 to 64,66667. Indeed, the observation from cycle 1 showed a positive impact on the direct method of teaching speaking. Yet, this result was not satisfied or given a significant result. Then the next cycle was conducted.

3.2 Cycle 2

The process in cycle 2 was conducted similarly to the cycle 1. The discrepancies were noticed in the acting stage in which the treatment was carried out. In cycle 2, the teacher and the researchers encouraged the students to be more active in the speaking activities. Unlike the previous cycle, in cycle 2 students were given time to think about the picture or video they saw. When the time was up, they were presented with some sentences and vocabulary they found based on the photo and video. The observation and reflection stages were conducted as in the previous cycle.

The pretest and post test results in cycle 2 are shown in Figure 5 below:

ASPECT	CYCLE 2 (%)	
	Pretest	Post-test
Mean	64,8	69,33333
Students who pass the minimal score (b)	30	53,33333

FIGURE 5 The result of pretest and post-test in cycle 2

Based on the table above both the mean score and students who passed the minimal score were improved. The mean score improves from 64,8% to 69,33333%. It means that

the overall score gained by the students showed an increase. Then, the students who passed the test also improved from 30% to 53,3333 %. It meant that the implementation of the direct method in the classroom had a positive impact on the students.

3.3 Improvement of Students' Speaking Ability

^[9]The speaking rubric proposed by David P. Harris was used to assess students' abilities. This rubric assesses five aspects of speaking ability: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The rubric used a score ranging from 1-5. Score 5 is the highest category explained the students have the best speaking category.

To know whether the students improved their speaking ability or not, the researchers used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{y_1 - y}{y} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{69,3333 - 56,1333}{56,1333} \times 100\%$$

$$P = 68,3333$$

The overall improvement of the student's speaking ability from cycle 1 to cycle 2 was 68,3333%. In the first cycle, the students' speaking ability improved by 31,4622%. In short, it showed that applying the direct method to encourage students to get involved in speaking activities increased from just 31,4622% to 68,3333%.

4 Conclusion

From the research findings, it can be concluded that encouraging students to participate actively in the classroom involves a suitable and appropriate teaching method to apply. These teaching methods should give the freedom to express opinions or thoughts without intimidating or judging the students whether they are correct or incorrect. Correcting the students' mistakes must still be provided, yet it can be done inductively so that the students do not feel insecure.

Moreover, in college situations the direct method is suitable. Based on the findings, the students' speaking ability shows an improvement though it does not improve significantly. At least, the learning experience during the teaching and learning activities is alive and the activities can enhance the students' English mastery.

The suggestion from this research for future similar research is to ensure that the researchers have numerous resources such as collaborators or teams that support each other

in designing a mature plan. The researcher also has to be skillful in classroom time management since classroom action research takes time when it is conducted.

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