

# Using Visual Aids to Develop Students' Speaking Skill

1<sup>st</sup> Nurhizrah Gistituati  
Educational Science  
State Padang University  
Padang, Indonesia  
[icha\\_yp@yahoo.com](mailto:icha_yp@yahoo.com)

2<sup>nd</sup> Refnaldi  
Educational Science  
State Padang University  
Padang, Indonesia  
[refnaldi@yahoo.com](mailto:refnaldi@yahoo.com)

3<sup>rd</sup> Syaifullah  
Educational Science  
State Padang University  
Padang, Indonesia  
[syaifullah@unilak.ac.id](mailto:syaifullah@unilak.ac.id)

**Abstract**—At English Education Department of Education and Teachers Training Faculty of *Universitas Lancang Kuning*, it was found that the students had low speaking skills. One of the factors was the students' hesitation in making mistakes especially mistakes in grammar. The aim of this research was to improve the students' low speaking skills by using Visual Aid. It was classroom Action Research which had been conducted in three cycles. The participants of this research were the students of the English Education Department of Education and Teachers Training Faculty of *Universitas Lancang Kuning*. It was found that there was improvement of the students' speaking skills under the use of Visual Aids within three cycling process or fifteen meetings. In conclusion, Visual Aids can help the students to improve their speaking skills at the second year students of English Department of Education and Teachers Training Faculty of *Universitas Lancang Kuning*.

**Key Words:** *Speaking, Visual Aids*

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the evidences of students' English mastery is speaking. It is the students' performance, which is normally performed when they share any information to the others. It is why the success of the students in learning a language is commonly judged from their speaking performance, in private and public. It means that if the students do not perform well in their speaking, people will judge them as unsuccessful language learners. Consequently, as language learners, they must be able to speak the language that they learn.

At English Education Department of Education and Teacher's Training Faculty of *Universitas Lancang Kuning*, speaking is taught for three semesters. Generally, its goal is to develop the students' fluency in speaking English. Although Speaking has been taught for two semesters, it seems that the students are not fully successful yet on their speaking. As a fact, most of them still use their mother tongues or Indonesian in their daily activities even though they are required to speak English in the campus. Moreover, it can be seen from the low results of their speaking score test, it was given to gain more concrete data to upgrade their low fluency in speaking. This is one of the indicators that their speaking skill was low which some of the following phenomena and problems generally caused, the students are shy to speak, they are afraid of making mistakes and errors, they have limited vocabularies, they could not pronounce a lot

of words in their sentences well, and they always tend to forget what to say when they are sharing their ideas.

To solve these problems in speaking class, the use visual aids in order to develop the students' speaking skill will be used. The speaking skill that will be developed in this study is descriptive speech because the use of visual aid exactly helps the learners in describing something. Canning-It is suggested that: "visuals can be used to help enhance the meaning of the message trying to be conveyed by the speakers through the use of paralinguistic cues" [1]. Moreover, she claims that: The use of illustrations, visuals, pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likenesses, cartoons, charts, graphs, colors, replicas, reproductions, or anything else used to help one sees an immediate meaning in the language may benefit the learner by helping to clarify the message, provide the visual works in a positive way to enhance or supplement the language point.

In addition, there are many kinds of visual aids that can be applied to improve the students' speaking skills, such as speakers, objects, models, chalkboards, pictures, drawings, sketches, films, slides, and projections [2]. Each of these visual aids has different characters and functions. These can be applied based on what the topic is. Because of the various numbers of visual aids, some selected objects or pictures of the objects, and markers or chalk will be applied.

Moreover, visual aid is going to be applied in this research as aid to solve the students' problem in speaking particularly descriptive speech. They may select any objects, pictures, and markers or chalks as long as they are relevant with the topic of the speaking class. Object is going to be used because it is easy to be found. Furthermore, it is easy to bring and apply anywhere and anytime. In addition, it is an excellent visual aid because it can eliminate most of the possible distortion of size, shape, and color, and so is marker and chalk or marker [2]. Moreover, the use of visual aids can be one of the easiest ways to help the students in developing their speaking skill, particularly descriptive speech. In conclusion, this research will not only to identify about using visual aids but also to find out the factors which influence the students in using it.

A number of researchers have been identified which conducted research were dealing with using visual aid in their language classroom. They strongly argued that their research findings can solve the above problems. First, a

research in applying visual aids in form of videos was carried out by Herron, Hanley and Cole. It was found that the use of visual supports in the form of descriptive pictures significantly improve comprehension scores with language videos for English speaking students learning French [3]. The results of the study indicate that extensive listening is facilitated by the richness of the context that visual organizers, such as educational videos provided. Next, a recent large-scale survey by [4] disclosed that the students like learning language through the use of videos. One of the results of her survey shows that learners prefer action/entertainment films to language films or documentaries in the classroom. She stated that although these films may seem to hold student interest, she believes that it could be inferred that student comprehension of the video may be due to the visual clues instead of the auditory components. Finally, it is also found that video offers contextual support and/or helps learners to visualize words as well as meanings [3]. It can be concluded that there were some researches about speaking ability improvement and the application of visual aids in teaching and learning a language.

Even though there have been many studies that have been done by the previous researchers dealing with speaking skills and visual aids appliance, it still needs more studies to find out what factors that may cause students to have low speaking skills and the implementation one of visual aids in form of object in teaching and learning process. As a part of a continuing of studying in speaking, a research dealing with the students' speaking skills need to be conducted. In this research, visual aids will be applied as a solution towards students' low speaking skill, because very few studies that have dealt with using visual aids in studies their effect on speaking abilities.

Speaking is one of the productive skills that must be mastered by the students in learning a language. They are to be able to give their opinion to the others because of speaking. And they are to be able to express their feelings in speaking. Moreover, they are going to be known by the others because of their speaking skill. It is noted that: "Speaking is the way of one in giving his/her opinion without hesitation or fear" [5]. It is reported that: "speaking is the aural /oral skill because it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning [6]. It is observed that: "Speaking is used for many different purposes, each purpose involves different skills, such as established rapport, or to engage in the friends, to seek or express opinion, to persuade someone about something, or clarify information" [7]. It is stated that: "speaking is an active productive skill and makes use of oral production communication through speaking is commonly performed face to face [8]. It is said that: "Learning to speak competently is a complex task. It involves the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency" [9].

Based on the speaking definition given above, it can be concluded that speaking skill can be described into some skills in oral communication. It is as a way of

students in sharing and giving their idea without feeling fear of mistake or embarrassed. It means that, when never or where ever the students are, they will not be feeling afraid of anything to speak or to practice their English. It is one of the verbal utterances to convey the meaning and it can be applied in face to face contact. Finally, it is a complex task because it involves the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

It defined that: "Visual aid is a form of speech development that allows audience to see as well as to hear about the material" [2]. From the expert definition, the researchers can imply that visual aid is a progression of speech performance. It uses a media in delivering the material. In addition, the use of illustrations, visuals, pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likenesses, cartoons, charts, graphs, colors, replicas, reproductions, or anything else used to help one sees an immediate meaning in the language may benefit the learner by helping to clarify the message, provide the visual works in a positive way to enhance or supplement the language point [4]. One of the beneficences in using Visual Aid is able to help the students catch the material that is being spoken. Furthermore, it is explained that there are various visual aids that can be applied in delivering material effectively [2]:

1. The speaker. It is the best visual aid. Speakers can show the meaning of the material by using gesture, movement and attire.
2. Objects. They are excellent visual aids. Because they can eliminate most of the possible distortions of size, shape, and color.
3. Models. It is representation used to show the construction or to serve as a copy.
4. Chalkboard. It is unbeatable. It is to write a volume of the material while they are talking. And it is overused because it is so readily available.
5. Pictures, Drawings, and Sketches. They probably account for a majority of all visual aids used in speeches in or out of the classroom. Because they may be obtained or made so much more easily and inexpensively, their use is undoubtedly justified. Obviously, any picture, drawing, and sketch give up some aspect of realism in shape, size, color, or detail.
6. Film, Slide, and Projection. They are called as professional visual aids used in education, business, and industry. On the other hand, their use offers obstacles that may be nearly insurmountable for the beginner.

There are some kinds of visual aids which are written at the previous line. So, the researchers are going to concern on using object or its picture, and marker or chalkboard in this field. It is limited on using it because it is an excellent visual aid that it eliminates most of the possible distortion of size, shape, and color [2].

Referring to the applying visual aids, it is described that: "visual aids can be presented on the other forms such as describing picture, picture differences, and things in common, shopping list, and solving a problem" [10]. For

these activities, the students have a visual thing on their hand. That is picture or a chart. Then, students start speaking based on what they see on it. In conclusion, Visual Aids are the most appropriate media that can help the students to develop their speaking skills.

## II. METHOD

The research was a classroom action research. This was typically a classroom problem solving. Action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation which these practices are carried out [11].

The research has been done at English Education Department of Education and Teachers Training Faculty of *Universitas Lancang Kuning*. Participants of this research were the second year students. There were two classes all of them, class A and B. Moreover, there were fifty-five all of them together. This research particularly has been conducted at class B where there were twenty-four students all of them. Specifically, the number of female and male can be seen below:

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Students' Gender	Number of students
Female	17
Male	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>

The data on this research were collected through observation, field note, interview, and speaking test. First, observation and field note were used during teaching and learning process. In this process, the researcher and collaborator observed and noted any students' activities related to the use of visual aid on their speaking. The second, interview was used in collecting the students' impression about using visual aid in speaking class. The third, speaking test was applied in collecting the quantitative data. The result of the test was scored by using speaking rubric guide as seen on below table:

TABLE 2: WEIGHTING TABLE OF SPEAKING SKILL RUBRIC

Weighting Table						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	0	25	50	50	75	100
G	16.6	33.2	50	66.5	83	100
V	16.6	33.2	50	66.7	83.2	100
F	16.6	33.2	50	66.4	83	100
C	17.4	34.8	52	65	82.5	100

(Transcript Score of the Weighting Table)

Then, to ease the researchers and collaborator to categorize or to see the students' speaking skill result, the above weighting table score can be reflected into the following range as follows:

TABLE 3: RANGE OF SPEAKING SCORE

Range of the scores	The level of Speaking Skill and Motivation
86-100	Very Good
71-85	Good
56-70	Fair
10-55	Poor

Soure : [12]

After collecting the data, those were analyzed quantitative and qualitatively. Quantitative data were all the data gotten from the speaking test. It was analyzed by the researcher, collaborator, and raters. Researchers and collaborator assessed the students' test result by using speaking rubrics. Moreover, they were helped by some raters in order to keep the trustworthiness of the speaking test result. Qualitative data were the data gotten from observation, interview and field note. They functioned to explore the factors influence students' speaking skill by using visual aid.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. Results

The research has been conducted in three cycles. The result of students' speaking skill from Cycle I (CI) to Cycle III (CIII) can be seen on the below table:

TABLE 4: SPEAKING TEST RESULT

FROM CYCLE I TO CYCLE III				
No	Speaking indicators	SCORE		
		CI	CII	CIII
1	A	26.04	50	45.83
2	G	39.58	58.33	37.5
3	V	44.16	54.16	66.66
4	F	42.62	50	50
5	C	46.58	33.3	62.5

### B. Discussions

It was explained before that this research was conducted for three cycles and fifteen meetings. On Cycle I, researcher and collaborator saw there was no significant changing of the students' speaking skill score. It was caused by their low comprehension. They did not present the topics exactly liked what was decided. Furthermore, researcher and collaborator continued to Cycle II. For this cycle, students' comprehension was the focused on the research. Moreover, researcher and collaborator wanted to improve their comprehension by using visual aid with different topics. After doing the research for five meetings, the researcher and collaborator could see there was a changing of the students' comprehension score. For the cycle II, the researcher and collaborator found a new problem. It was students' grammar. In this cycle the grammar of students was the lowest score from the other indicators. Thus, the researcher continued to Cycle III. For this cycle the focused was on the improving students' grammar score by using visual aid with different topics. After doing the research for five meetings, the researcher and collaborator found that all of the students' speaking indicators score were higher than the previous meetings. Even though their scores were higher, their levels were generally fair.

Second, to find out the factors influenced students' speaking skill by using visual aid, the researcher and collaborator analyzed the observation and field note lists. From these lists, the researcher and collaborator found there were some factors influenced them. Firstly, they did not serious to follow the class. When they were in the class, they made small discussion among their friends. They did not pay full attention to the lecturer's

explanation and presentation. Secondly, they were still reluctant to speak spontaneously. As a fact, there were two students did not want to present their material. They said that they did not ready physically and mentally yet or they were afraid of their friends. Next, they did not have good condition when came to the class. They were tired and sleepy because of full day classes. They wanted to leave the class as soon as they could. Finally, they did not have enough understanding about the topic. When they presented their material, it was out of the topic. Moreover, what they were talking about did not give clear description of the topic.

Finally, to find out the other factors, the researcher did an unstructured interview. It was about students' problem on speaking and their opinion about using visual aid. For speaking, they had some problems, such as lack of vocabulary, afraid of making mistake, shy to speak, no confidence to express the idea, and less motivation to practice. For applying visual, they said that visual aid was one of the best instruments or treatments to help them in expressing or describing the material. Because of the problem on speaking they still could not express their idea fluently. However, visual aid could reduce their shame, nervous, and reminded them about the topic to be described. In short, from three of these visual aids pictures, markers, and objects, pictures were the most helpful visual aid for them.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that visual aid can help the students in speaking, especially in describing the material. First, visual aid reminds them what the exact description of the topics is. Previously, the students were often forgetting about the material to be talked. Now, by using visual aid they can remember the material and its components. Second, visual aid can reduce the students' nervous. When they are speaking without holding something on their hand, they are feeling nervous. On the other hand, by holding something on their hand, they feel confident on their speaking. Finally, by using visual aid, the students can speak fluently and confidently.

The finding and the conclusions of this research have some implications. The implications are as follow:

- a. To the researcher himself:
  - 1). It is a new instrument that can be applied in every speaking class.
  - 2). It is new finding that can be applied for other communication circumstances
- b. To the other speaking lecturers, it can be applied for their speaking class as an alternative instrument in improving their students' speaking skill.
- c. To the students, particularly students who are learning a language, visual aid can help them to improve their confident, vocabulary, and understanding.

Based on the above conclusion and the implication, there some suggestions that might be

suggested to the other speaking lecturers and English students:

- a. Speaking lecturers may apply this, but they must be careful in selecting the material. It means that they must find the best visual aid to be matched with the topic.
- b. Students may apply this as an aid to improve their speaking skill. In addition it can help them to build their confident and deliver the material fluently.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Wilson. C, (2000). Practical Aspects of Using Video in the Foreign Language Classroom. *TESL Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 11, November 2000. Retrieved on 27 November 2008 from <http://iteslj.org/Article/Canning-Video.html>.
- [2] Verderber, R. F, (1979). *The Challenge of Effective Speaking*. Wardsworth Publishing Company.
- [3] Herron, et. al, (1995). Practical Aspects of Using Video in the Foreign Language Classroom. *TESL Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 11, November 2000. Retrieved on 27 November 2008 from <http://iteslj.org/Article/Canning-Video.html>.
- [4] Hughes, (2003). *Testing for Language Teacher* (2nded). United Kingdom: Cambridge.
- [5] Hornby, (1974). *Advanced Learner Dictionary of Current English*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- [6] Nunan, D, (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: the McGraw-hill companies. Inc.
- [7] Richard, J.C and Willy. A, Renadya, (2005) *Methodology in Language teaching, USA*: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Widdowson, H. G, (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. London: Oxford University press.
- [9] Hedge, Tricia, (2000). *Teaching and Learning on the Language Classroom*. New York: Oxford University press.
- [10] Ur Penny, (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University.
- [11] Kemmis, S, (1981). *The Action Research Planner*. Deakin University.
- [12] Leo, Susanto, (2006). *English for Leisure Time Speaking*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.