

## THE USE OF STORYTELLING TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE SUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS OF GRADE VIII STUDENTS IN SMPIT AL- KHAIRAAT IN THE ACADAMIC YEAR OF 2017/2018

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to improve students' speaking skills of grade VIII students through storytelling technique in SMPIT Al-Khairaat Yogyakarta.

The study, which is categorised as action research, was conducted in two cycles. The steps of this study were reconnaissance, observation and planning of the actions, implementation of the actions, and reflections. The data of this study were qualitative in nature and supported by quantitative data. The qualitative data were obtained from the observation and discussion while the quantitative data were obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores. The instruments used in this study were observation guides, interview guides, pre-test and post-test. The data were in the form of vignette, interview transcripts, and students' test scores. The data were analysed by assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the result. Validity and reliability were examined by democratic, result, process, catalytic, and dialogic validity.

The finding shows that the implementation of storytelling technique can improve students' speaking skills especially their pronunciations, grammars, and vocabularies. The improvement of students' average speaking scores were from 3,33 (pre-test) to 4,25 (post-test). The use of dictionary, English classroom, media, and feedback also supported the storytelling activities and made the teaching learning process more fun. In short, storytelling activities supported by the various media, the use of dictionary, and the feedback improved students' speaking skills.

**Keywords:** storytelling activity, students' improvement, speaking skills

### INTRODUCTION

As the output of study, students of junior high school are expected to master the four skills of English language including speaking. As Richards (2008: 19) said in his book, speaking is a skill that student should master as it is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners.

He (*ibid*) also stated that students or teachers see their improvement in spoken language proficiency to measure their English ability. In fact, it is important for students to master the speaking skills and for teachers to teach the skills.

According to the current curriculum, ELT has categorized into two. Based on the *Permendikbud* No. 58 Year

2014, in the article 5 verse 6, it is mentioned that English is a compulsory subject. Furthermore, still in the same article verse 8, English belongs to the subject of interest. It implies that students who take English as a subject of interest will have additional learning three hours per week. Moreover, the purpose of teaching English includes communication development in the target language. The students are expected to be able to use English in school activity or environment activity (Depdiknas, 2007: 6-7).

However, the reality seems different from what has been stated. Ideally, the teacher should teach the reading, writing, listening, and speaking in order to achieve the learning objectives. Unfortunately, the process of learning English in SMPIT Al-Khairaat does not cover all the skills. The teaching of reading, listening, and writing are more dominant than speaking. The teacher does not cover speaking skills frequently because it is difficult to be taught to the students. As a result, the grade VIII students of SMPIT Al-Khairaat cannot express their ideas orally in English. They do not speak English in the classroom.

Many experts like Brown (2001), and Richard and Rodgers (2001) had found the technique in speaking learning, one of the techniques is storytelling. There are also many proofs that storytelling is a useful technique to teach English, especially speaking which is the main concern of the research.

Storytelling is more likely an effective technique and as Indiana (2007: 2) said that storytelling can be

a bridge between students' first language and second language.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking helps people to communicate. It also is a way to express our mind. In recent years, people are taught to speak because it will be one of the crucial ways to be accepted in society. As Way (1997: 3) mentioned, pragmatic knowledge that we get from language learning in childhood can lead to a conversational ability. This ability has helped the students, in this context, to learn better, especially in classroom or school. Speaking itself is one of the four major abilities which have an important role for people to be accepted by the public. In today's society, the mastery of the speaking ability in English as a second or foreign-language becomes a priority (Richards, 2008: p. 19).

However, students of junior high school or senior high school who learn English as foreign language find it difficult to master the speaking ability. Speaking is a productive ability involving speech to communicate or express feeling to others (Spartt, Pulverness, & Williams, 2001: 34). Unlike writing, speaking is more challenging because it happens in a *real time* situation. Many students feel difficult in expressing their feeling through speaking because when they speak they cannot revise what they said; secondly, the person whom they speak with may wait for them to speak right so it will consume more time to express their ideas (PDST, 2014).

Furthermore, Richards (2008) mentioned that spoken language

should be taught normally as if they communicate in a formal or informal way for different purposes. However, those who are anti-social or who are hardly expressing themselves in spoken language will tend to keep their ideas for themselves. For this reason, researcher highlight that speaking ability is crucially needed for students so they can express their ideas spontaneously. According to Harmer (2007), there are important elements of speaking which should be mastered by students. The elements are categorized into language features and social processing. These elements can be dragged down to several factors which should cope with the students; these are vocabulary and expression, fluency, pronunciation and intonation, and interactive skills. Foremost, in every class, every teacher must have different goals of teaching speaking yet, it only has one purpose which is to encourage the students to speak bravely. The different goals of teaching may lead to the different speaking event. Thornbury (2005: 13 -14 in Harmer 2007: 343) said that there are “various dimensions of different speaking events in order to describe different speaking genre” such as the distinction of transactional and interpersonal functions. In conclusion, speaking can also be seen as an interactive and non-interactive event.

There are other distinctions proposed by Littlewood (1981 in Richard 2006: 18) that there are two main group activities, which are: (a) Precommunicative activities: structural activities and quasi-communicative activities and (b) Communicative activities: functional

communication activities and social interaction activities.

Besides pre-communicative and communicative activities, teaching English should also need an approach to bridge the learning material and the teaching process and it should be feasible to achieve the learning goals. For this reason, an approach called text-based approach or known as genre-based approach in communicative language teaching proposed by Richards (2006) is considered as a good approach to achieve the communicative competence as it involves the mastery of different types of texts. The text which is used in specific contexts refers to structural sequences of language such as a conversation in telephone, discussion of personal problems, and casual conversations with friends and so on.

Furthermore, storytelling has been widely used by people to communicate with others. By telling a story, people will be more interested to listen to what other people said. For that reason, teachers also use stories to grab the attention of the students. Traditionally, storytelling can be illustrated by students sitting cross-legged on the floor and teacher telling the fictional stories. However, Miller (2008) said in its development, storytelling also has more meaning and form in the classroom, such as written text, oral narration, and instructional media. Also, she has defined storytelling in more narrow or specific terms.

The definition of storytelling according to The National Council of Teachers of English (2005 cited in

Eck 2006: 21-22) is “the relating of a tale to one or more listeners, and they emphasize that it is not congruent with simply acting out a drama or reciting a story from memory or a text, but it is the creation of mental images of the elements of a story through voice and gestures to an audience”.

Meanwhile, Safdarian (2013: 208 cited in Zuriyah, 2017: 14) stated that storytelling is a way of re-telling a story with different word construction after being told by the storyteller. Moreover, Ling (cited in Zuriyah, 2017: 15) said that students can transfer information and deliver messages through storytelling as a learner-centred method. Caine et al. (2005 cited in Eck 2006: 22) believed that storytelling is an important way to access, show, and retain information and knowledge. As Caine et al. (2005) argued, the brain research confirms that in a story form, information can be naturally organized in the mind. The similarity of the definition of storytelling among nearly educational theorist has led to the conclusion that storytelling is a fundamental strategy to deliver meaning and making meaning in a short and interesting way of our experiences.

Dujmović and Pula (2006) mentioned that listening to stories helps students to acquire social experience and to gain their vocabulary and sentence structure. Listening to stories can also develop students' concentration skills through visual clues (for example, pictures and illustrations), students' prior knowledge of how language works, and students' general knowledge (*ibid*). In other words, listening to storytelling helps students to

understand the overall meaning of a story which also related to their personal experience. In language teaching and learning, the curriculum and syllabus always become the reference in choosing the material to be taught. Storytelling is a technique where can give contributions to learning in the whole school curriculum. According to Dujmović and Pula (2006: 4-5), there are three dimensions that can be added.

1. Stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development in children.
2. Stories are means of developing learning which cover reinforcing thinking strategies, developing strategies for learning English, and developing strategy skills.
3. Carefully selected storytelling can be used to develop other subjects in the curriculum such as science, history, music and drama, geography and the environment.

In order to teach using storytelling, teachers should know how to choose stories appropriately. Choosing stories is not easy. Teachers should know whether they should use authentic stories or adapted stories. There are numbers of consideration in selecting stories. The students' grade differs whether the material used will be authentic or adapted. Not only grade but also age, interest, and developmental level should also be considered. Ioannou-Georgiou & Verdugo (2011: 5) have mentioned for teenagers, in particular, the selected stories should have: (1) a clear storyline; (2) plenty of repetition; (3) opportunities for participation; (4)

helpful illustration;(5) and appropriate linguistic level

Once an appropriate story is chosen, teachers need to prepare how it will be taught in the classroom. There are three stages teachers should consider while teaching storytelling; (a) stage one is before the lesson, (b) stage two is during the lesson, (c) and stage three is after the lesson (Ioannou-Georgiou & Verdugo, 2011).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is categorized as action research type. The researcher's aim was to improve students' speaking skills through storytelling technique. It is a process of using research principles in which the educational process is applied to improve the daily practice aspect in or outside the classroom. Burns (2010: 2) mentioned that action research is a part, for some time, a broad of movement in education generally. Nunan (1992 cited in McKay and Marshall, 2001) points out that there are three major characteristics in action research: it is carried out by the practitioner, it is collaborative, and it is proposed to change things.

The research was conducted in SMPIT Al-Khairaat Yogyakarta. It is located in Veteran St. No 768 c, Warungboto, Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta. It involved grade VIII students in the academic year of 2017/2018. This research was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2017/2018. It was conducted from December 2017 to March 2018. The English teacher and the students of SMPIT Al-Khairaat Yogyakarta were involved in this research. The

participants of the research were the grade VIII students in SMPIT AlKhairaat Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2017/2018.

The instruments used in this study were: (1) interview guideline; (2) observation guideline; (3) and test. The guideline was used as a guide only. The data was in form of qualitative and quantitative. The information on the teaching and learning process of this research which was qualitative data was collected by observing the teaching process, interviewing the English teacher and students. Moreover, the quantitative data was collected from speaking test scores. The speaking rubric used in this study is an adapted analytic scale proposed by Brown (2001).

In order to ensure the data, the researcher adapted the five criteria of validity by Anderson et al. (in Burns 2010). The five criteria are democratic validity, result validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity. There are five broad phases taken from the procedures in the cycle of the research. They are: (a) reconnaissance, (b) planning, (c) observation, (d) action, (e) and reflection. The first cycle was the continuing process and stages were going in a loop. For that reason, the researcher must redo the process until the expected result is achieved.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research could be inferred from the qualitative and quantitative data which was collected by the researcher. The quantitative data were taken from the

students' speaking pre-test and post-test scores. The qualitative data were gathered from the observation of the teaching-learning process and the interview with the English teacher and students.

The research was implemented in two cycles to see the improvements of the students. Since the objective of the research had been achieved, the research team decided to end the research in cycle 2.

After analysing the students' speaking scores and interviews, the researcher made reflections in every meeting. The conclusion of the reflection is that the actions implemented successfully improved the speaking skills of the students of class VIII at SMPIT AlKhairaat Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2017/2018.

In summary of the implementation, there were five actions applied during the implementation. The actions were applied using the genre-based approach and the storytelling technique proposed by Ioannou-georgiou & Verdugo (2011). The first action was storytelling activities. Caine et al. (2005 as cited in Eck, 2006: 22) mentioned that storytelling is an important way to access, show, and retain information and knowledge. Also, by telling stories, students can transfer information and deliver messages (Ling as cited in Zuriyah, 2017: 15).

To implement the storytelling, researcher used the recordings. The handouts were also arranged based on genre-based approach. First, the

students needed to listen to the stories and in the end, students needed to perform their own story in front of the class. During the implementation, researcher emphasized in improving the five aspects of speaking skills. The researcher also applied drilling to help students' learning the pronunciation and accuracy. Brown (2001: 271-274) stated that drilling will help the students to get more opportunity to listen and orally repeat the words. The storytelling technique helped students to gain their vocabularies and improve their pronunciation. Storytelling also helped students to learn grammar and sentence structure better. However, the achievement of students' speaking skills was not significant due to the time limitation.

The use of dictionary was also useful in the learning process. Researcher asked the students to always consult their dictionary for the words' meaning and grammar. However, the role of teacher was still important to provide more explanation about the words of sentences. Applying this action would effectively help the teaching and learning process. Aside from that, applying English classroom would be beneficial as students would acquire more English vocabularies.

Another action applied was the use of media. The media had important part in the teaching learning process as it would give clarity of the lessons. In this study, the media used were pictures, blank paper, handout, recordings, and other supporting media. The students were happy using the media provided by the researcher. However, the media were not varied enough which according to the

researcher gave a little boredom to the teaching learning process.

Furthermore, to overcome the grammar mistakes and pronunciation mistakes, researcher made use of the oral feedback. In teaching and learning process, it is the role of teachers to show the details of how to convey and negotiate the difficult meaning of language (Brown, 2001: 271). He adds that the useful linguistics feedback should be mastered by the teacher because students rely on the teacher. Giving feedback was very useful to help students to cope with their grammar and pronunciation mistake. In addition, the self-check dictionary helped the teacher with the learning process and helped the students to find the meaning. It resulted that students also became more active in the learning process.

Generally, the teaching and learning process conducted by the researcher was well-conducted in the field. The students could follow the process and they were also having fun while learning. However, the time given by the teacher was not enough to achieve the expected result. Therefore, the result achieved was not significant. Overall, by using storytelling technique, the objective of this research was successfully achieved.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The aim of this research was to improve students speaking skills of grade VIII students of SMPIT Al-Khairaat Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2017/2018 by implementing storytelling technique. The genre-

based approach was used combined with other techniques: storytelling and drilling. After carrying all the process in this research, there are five conclusions that can be drawn. They are; (1) The storytelling activities successfully improved students' speaking skills. The activities should be implemented with other techniques such as drilling in order to help students acquire the goal. Students enjoyed the process and the activities were fun. By applying the technique, students got new activities and atmosphere of language teaching and learning. (2) The use of dictionary as a supporting medium for the students has helped the process run smoothly. The students became self-learner and depended on their dictionary for words' meaning and sentence structure.

However, the role of English teacher was still needed to monitor and help the students to understand the lesson. (3) The implementation of using English in everyday teaching such as greeting, checking attendance, giving appreciation, question and answer section, and leave-taking encouraged students to speak English more. That also helped to boost their confidence. The students no longer felt shy to express themselves through speaking English language. That also increased students' vocabularies. (4) The use of media such as handouts, pictures, recordings, and other supporting media helped the teaching learning process a lot. The students could understand better by looking at the handouts. The pictures also brought fun atmosphere to the teaching process. (5) The feedback gave positive impact to the students.

They became more motivated and were not afraid to make mistake while learning.

In this part, the researcher can propose the implications that can be implemented in the future. The use of storytelling could improve the students speaking skills, and the activities were also fun and did not bore the students. Teachers can apply the technique but there must be more varied activities such as role-playing or games. The models of the story can be varied depending on the curriculum. In the previous activities, the media used in the implementation were only pictures and handouts. Therefore, teachers can apply varied media such as videos, posters, and many more. The various media can help students to cope with the boredom and to build their interest and attention.

Encouragement, verification, and clarification are also needed to build students' strong motivation and self-confident in the ELT process. The classroom English can be implemented and students should be given more chance to practice their English, both writing and speaking. The use of classroom language in every meeting can give students proficiency in English language.

However, due to the limited time, the researcher only could apply storytelling to other techniques such as drilling and repetition. The English teachers can keep on applying the storytelling technique with other techniques to create more fun and easy teaching-learning process. The storytelling technique can also be applied to either improve speaking skills or other skills so students will be

more motivated in the English teaching and teaching process. The media used in the implementation was only pictures and recordings. The English teachers can use other media such as video, puppet, or other interesting media to encourage students to learn more. In addition to that, the English teachers may give other communicative activities in the teaching and learning process such as inviting native speakers or giving outside classroom learning. Also, giving chance to write a conclusion of the materials then presents it in every meeting or once in a month can build students' confidence and students' understanding of the material.

In this research, the researcher directed the study in two months due to the limited time. Other researchers may conduct the study in a more extended time keeping to find more activities to enhance students' speaking abilities. In addition, researchers can direct this research in different grades, either middle school or senior secondary school with the purpose that the result will be more acceptable. Likewise, they can direct this research in different schools which have distinctive qualities from SMPIT Yogyakarta so the research findings can be broader. Additionally, they can utilize storytelling technique alongside different technique to make more fun activities. The media can likewise be changed to encourage the students in learning English.

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