

**Improving Students' Speaking Skill of Grade VII A at SMP Negeri 1 Kasihan Bantul
Through The Use of Cue Cards in The 2016/2017 Academic Year**

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Abstract: This action research aimed to improve the students' speaking skill of grade VII A at SMP Negeri 1 Kasihan Bantul through the use of cue cards in the 2016/2017 academic year. The qualitative data were collected through observing the teaching and learning process, having interviews with the students, the English teacher and the research collaborator, and distributing open-ended questionnaires to the students. The quantitative data were collected through assessing the students' speaking performances by using an assessment rubric. The qualitative data were analyzed by assembling the data, coding the data, building interpretations and reporting the outcomes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. The qualitative improvement could be seen from the students' active participation in discussing the inputs texts, doing the interview game, and performing the situational cue cards. The cue cards supported the students' speaking skill improvement as it enabled the students to stimulate each other to speak English. Another improvement of the students' speaking skill also could be seen from the students' ability to generate their ideas in speaking. The qualitative findings were supported by the quantitative data results. The mean of the students' speaking scores improved from 6 in the pre-test to 14 in the progress test and to 17 in the post-test.

Keywords: *action research, speaking, cue cards*

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Introduction

English becomes a compulsory subject to learn from junior high school to university. There are receptive and productive skills that must be learnt in English teaching and learning process; the receptive skills are reading and listening while the productive skills are writing and speaking. Speaking is one of productive skills which have high influences in social interaction. Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts (Chaney in Kayi, 2006). By mastering speaking, the students can share their ideas. However, mastering speaking is not easy. In fact the students have many problems dealing with speaking. There are some features that make speaking a difficult language skill. The features cover clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation of English and interaction (Brown, 2001).

Based on the observation done on 18th and 22nd August, 2016, there were some problems faced by the students of grade VII A that obstructed the development of their speaking skills. The problem was the absence of the teaching media in the speaking class that made the students less interested in the lesson. It also made the students not used to practicing to speak in English. Thus, they were not confident to speak English and afraid of making mistakes.

In order to solve the problems, the researcher needs to be creative and innovative to find appropriate media in teaching young learners. One of the applicable media is cue cards. The cue cards media were chosen since cue cards are believed to be able to stimulate students to speak. Cue cards are cards with words and pictures on them (Harmer, 2007). Harmer argues that cue cards will help students to speak up easily in the form of words or phrases even sentences when they are involved in a conversation. It can be concluded that cue cards are small cards with words or pictures that contain clues. These cards can be used in individual, pair, and group work. Cue cards can attract the students' interest to participate actively in teaching and learning process of speaking.

Research Method

This research is action research which addressed speaking problems in teaching and learning through the use of cue cards media. The participants of the research were the researcher, the English teacher and the students. The research was conducted in two cycles in September 2016.

The place was at grade VII A at SMP Negeri 1 Kasihan Bantul. There were 32 students participated in the research. The instruments of the research were divided into two forms, test instruments and non-test instruments. The test instruments were speaking test and scoring rubrics. The non-test instruments were questionnaires, an observation checklist for the researcher and the teacher, and an interview guideline.

The data were in qualitative and quantitative forms. The qualitative data were collected through observing the teaching and learning process, having interviews with the students, the English teacher and the research collaborator, and distributing open-ended questionnaires to the students. The quantitative data were collected through assessing the students' speaking performances in pre-test, progress-test and post-test by using an assessment rubric.

To analyze the data, the researcher assembled the data, coded the data, compared the data, built meanings and interpretations, and reported the outcomes. To fulfill the validity of the research, five criteria proposed by Anderson cited in Burns (1999:161) were employed. Those five criteria are democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity and dialogic validity. Meanwhile, to fulfill the reliability of the data the research involved the researcher, the English teacher, and the students of grade VII A. To test the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher used time triangulation, investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation.

Research Findings

There were some successful results of the implementation of cue cards media on the students' speaking improvements. First, all students contributed more in discussing the input text and participated actively to show their best performance in the teaching and learning process of speaking. Second, the students could generate their ideas since they got sufficient inputs such as vocabularies, expressions, grammar, and pronunciation. Third, the students kept speaking English confidently though they doubted their pronunciation. Fourth, the students spoke English eagerly during the teaching and learning process using cue cards media. Fifth, regarding the quantitative data, the result is shown in Figure 1.

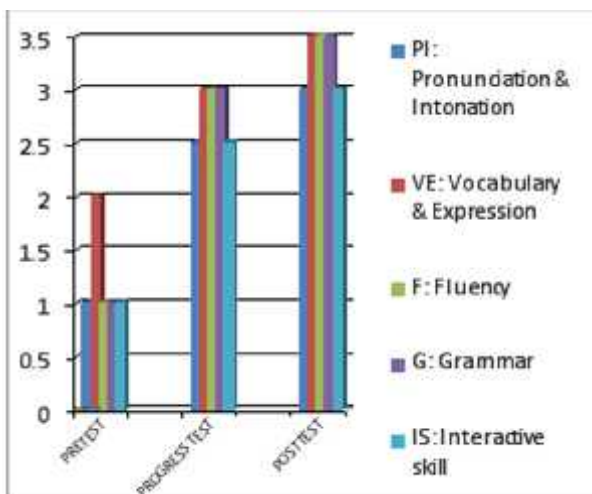


Figure 1: The mean scores of each indicator in pre-test, progress test and post-test

Based on this result, there is an improvement on the students' mean scores. In scale 1 to 4, the mean score of students' pre-test for the aspect of pronunciation was 1. After the process of implementation, this number increased to 3. The students' pre-test score for the aspect of vocabulary also increased. It was 2 and increased to 3.5 in the post-test. The increase was also found in students' fluency. It was 1 for the pre-test and 3.5 for the post-test. Next, the mean score of grammar also increased from 1 to 3.5. Another improvement was on students' interactive skill. The pre-test mean score for this aspect was 1 which then increased to 3. It can be

seen that the students' speaking skill improved since all of the students' scores in post-test were higher than those in the pre-test.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the students' speaking skill of Grade VII A at SMP Negeri 1 Kasihan Bantul improved through the use of cue cards. The actions were carried out in two cycles. Those actions were using cue cards during the presentation, practice and production activities. Those activities gave contributions to the improvement of students' speaking skill. In brief, based on the result of this research, speaking activities could be activated using cue cards media and the use of cue cards media could be effective in helping the students to contribute more in learning activities, stimulate them to speak English and generate their ideas in speaking English since they got sufficient input such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation by using cue cards in the teaching and learning activities.

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