

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL IN THE ASPECTS OF GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY ABOUT DESCRIBING ANIMALS BY USING CUE CARDS MEDIA

Dewi Sartika Putri<sup>1</sup>

Clarry Sada<sup>2</sup>

Urai Salam<sup>3</sup>

Tanjungpura University, Pontianak

Email: dedewdsp@gmail.com

### Abstract

*This research aimed at improving the students' speaking skill at grade VII of SMP Islamiyah Pontianak in the academic year of 2019/2020 through cue cards media. This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles; on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> respectively. It involved 22 seventh grader students as well as the English teacher as the collaborator. The data were taken from the observation, field notes and speaking task. The data of speaking was attained from speaking test which was measured through scoring rubric. The result revealed that students' problems in grammar and vocabulary had been solved by using Cue Cards media. The most interesting part of this study was, the cue cards could break the ice among the students as there are pictures and questions which stimulate students' prior knowledge and could be used as handy clues for them during the learning process. Furthermore, the students' speaking improved constantly from cycle 1 (the highest score was 48, 3 students got score 48), cycle 2 (the highest score was 64, 2 students got score 64) and cycle 3 (the highest score was 84, 6 students had not achieved the minimum score which is 75). Not only their individual speaking achievement got improved, but also their interest in learning. It was shown by the students' eagerness to pay attention and involve actively in doing every activity during teaching and learning process by using cue cards.*

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Cue Cards, Media*

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the skills that is significant for students in learning English as foreign language. Speaking is defined as the ability to produce language orally. It also means that there is a process of expressing the ideas. In other words, it is used for delivering ideas or thoughts orally. Since English is not the first language of Indonesian, speaking is taught as one of main focuses to be mastered. According to Richard (2008, p. 19), "the mastery of speaking skill in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners". It means, being able to producing language in English is essential for the learners. In mastering speaking, the students must be provided with many activities. Equally important, the media used in teaching speaking must be interesting and attractive for the students.

As stated in 2013's curriculum, one of the basic competences expected is that the students are able to deliver their ideas in describing people, things or places. By the same token, the students must know the vocabulary they are going to use and how to pronounce it correctly. Moreover, Heaton (1988) stated that there are three components of speaking ability; accuracy, fluency, comprehensibility. Thus, the students should master these three components of speaking in order to fulfill not only the basic competencies but also to enable the students to produce English language with good and understandable way.

However, found on the previous interview and observation conducted at SMP Islamiyah Pontianak, there are some problems faced in English learning process, especially in speaking. Most of the seventh graders use Bahasa Indonesia more often compared to English in speaking. Along with it, when they do oral performance, they have difficulty in pronouncing the words and often get them mispronounced. Moreover, their vocabulary is poor. By their limited vocabulary they tend to repeat the same words while speaking. Also, they use Bahasa Indonesia more when they got stuck in the middle of speaking. Moreover, they seem confused to construct simple sentences in English. Consequently, the students consider English as sort of tough subjects. Since they have had such supposition, they lose their interest in participating the lesson eagerly. Moreover, the teacher said that only a few students are enthusiastically drawn in during the English learning process while the rest tends to be passive. If this situation occurs all the time, it gradually affects their speaking skill as the improvement will not be significant.

In addition, teaching media, great supported aids in learning process, seems to be boring. Teaching media is rarely used in the classroom. This results in fewer drill for verbal actions for example speaking. To give verbal exercise, the teacher only asks the pupils to copy words or phrases that have been said by him and read the text in their book as speaking task. It can be seen that the work and less media being used.

As the problems mentioned above, both the researcher and the English teacher agreed to look for a new way to teach speaking for the seventh graders of SMP Islamiyah Pontianak. Teaching media used in this research called cue cards. Using media is one of the ways the teacher can apply to facilitate the process of learning in delivering materials. It can stimulate students' mind, motivation and interest. The existence of media can make the process of studying run optimally. Cue cards are expected to be applicable as teaching aid to unravel the problems found in the classroom. It is also deliberated as effortless, applicable, and easy to make. This teaching aid can be in form of small cards with pictures or words on them. As stated by Brown (2004 p.151) "pictures may be very simple, design to elicit a word

or a phrase". Cue cards are believed to be a stimulant for pupils to speak without any hesitation, for example in describing things or other objects. Moreover, cue cards are adjustable to any topic being learned. It can be modified into any lesson as needed

Referring to the previous study that is done by Yesi (2018), she used cue cards to teach speaking about local vacation. The focus was on cue cards students' speaking ability and determine the factors involved. She found that there was improvement on students' speaking performance. Also found in the previous study done by Farah (2013, p.23), she mentions that the aim of applying media is to encourage students in the learning process. It had positive impact in improving students' oral communicative skills, creating cooperative learning environment and enhancing students' motivation to learn better. Ariati (2015), found that there was significant improvement on students' speaking performance and the factors that influence those things were found. Hence, when selecting media, teachers should know and realize their students' characteristics. It is also notable for them to know their students' condition. The gap between previous studies and this study is that the researcher focuses on how well cue cards can be used to teach speaking in describing animals.

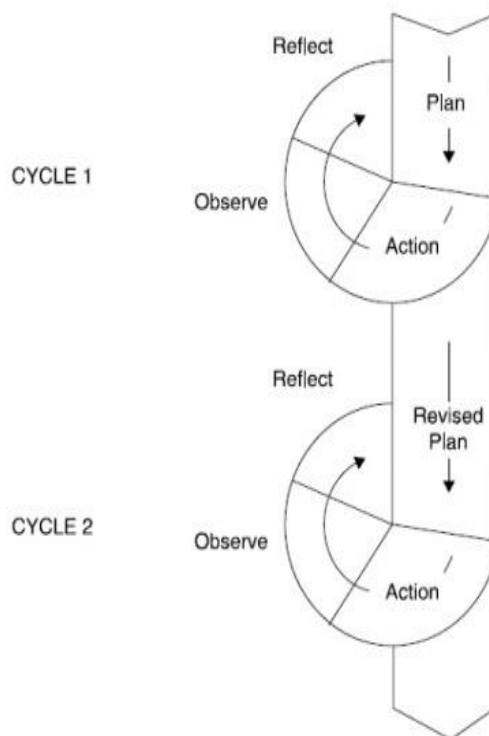
Considering the success of using cue cards media, the researcher conducted a classroom action research entitled: "Using Cue Cards to Teach Speaking" as an effort to enhance students' speaking skill by using cue cards media. In this present study, the participant was selected from seventh graders.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The method used is a classroom action research. This research is aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. In this case, the writer wanted to improve the students' speaking of seventh graders of SMP Islamiyah Pontianak by implementation the cue cards. According to Ferrance (2000, p.1) "action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of the research". Another key point, Andrew Green (2011.p.29) mentioned that this study is also called reflective practice whereas the teacher systematically evaluates her or his teaching through classroom research procedures. Ferrance (2000. p.13) also states the benefits of classroom action research which are: "(1) focus on school issue, problem and are of collective interest, (2) form of teacher professional development, (3) improve collegial interaction, (4) potential to impact school change, (5) reflect on own practice, and (6) improve communication".

Classroom action research consists of some stages. Lewin (1946) in Louis Cohan, Lawrence Manion & Keith Morrison (1990) ordered the action research process into four main stages; (1) planning, in this phase includes identifying the current problems and determining the feasible ones to be

solved. The data gathered by using observations techniques. Formerly, the researcher collected the data and carefully chosen and diminished the problems down collaboratively with the teacher. Correspondingly, she classified the feasible issues that she would emphasize on to be solved (2) acting, in this stage, the researcher started to set out the plans into action, the procedures for gathering the data that include observation and explanation of the circumstances as well as the participants. (3) observing, in observation, the researcher analyzed the data to become more reliable by analyzing them in both qualitative and quantitative ways. The researcher also tried to verify the reliability of the data. (4) reflecting, in this step, the researcher assessed the research as a complete process. Together with the collaborator, she deliberated the finding whether the implementation had either destructive or constructive effects to the teaching-learning process. The implementation of cue card could be said to be effective if it could reach the pointers stated by the researcher. The findings of the discussion were used as reflection for more actions.



**Figure 1. Cyclical action research model**

### **Technique of Data Collection**

The data were obtained through observation checklist. The observations were done in the classroom to ensure that the action was taken properly and, the students were learning in conducive surrounding. Observation

technique is intended to support the teacher to upgrade on an assorted of things that might not be done in the utmost effectual way. During the application of the action, the researcher led the observation and collected the data by using observation checklist. Then, the data would be examined in order to find the outcome of the actions and to make the conclusion of the research.

### Tools of Data Collection

There are three tools of data collection being used. The first tools to amass the data in this research is observation checklist. Observation checklist is a list of questions relate to speaking skill that the researcher was aimed to answer in doing the observation in the classroom. The second tool is speaking task. According to J. Charles Alderson & Lyle F. Bachman (2004) stated that speaking task is an activity where the speakers use the language to achieve a specific goal or unbiased in a certain speaking situation. This speaking task was used to get the evidence about the pupils' speaking capability. This task was done orally. The score of oral tasks was described into scoring rubric. The third tool is field notes. Field notes were meant to note or mark of students' doings, progression, limitations, and difficulties in each meeting. In this research, field notes were taken from what happened during the lesson.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data analyses are used in this research. The researcher particularized the information from observation checklist and field note descriptively. The results were summarized, described, and analyzed in qualitatively. At that point, to know the pupils' individual score in speaking test, the researcher analyzed the result by using formula below:

$$M = \frac{S}{MS} \times 100$$

Note: M= The students' individual score

S= The total score

MS= the maximum score in the all aspects (25)

*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (standard minimum score) was used to determine the students' individual score. Based on the standard minimum score for English subject at the school, the students are considered to pass the subject when they acquire score of  $\geq 75$ . Then, the score was categorized based on average, good and excellent.

Test Score	Classification
------------	----------------

90 - 100	Excellent
80 - 89	Good
70 - 79	Average
50 - 69	Poor
0 - 49	Very Poor

(Taken from Heaton, 1998)

Figure 2. Students Score Classification

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

This study was classroom action research (CAR) which was completed in three cycles. The researcher used the cue cards and all the students had the same opportunities to take part the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Subsequently, both the researcher and teacher monitored the students' performance in teaching and learning process. The researcher counted the individual student's score based on the speaking assessment, and then calculated the students' individual and mean score. Then, the researcher particularized the result of mean score and what was written in the field note in order to attain the difference in the research findings. Based on the observation and analysis of the students' score, it was found that students' speaking in describing animals has improved by using cue cards as media in teaching speaking. Cue cards solved students' problems namely in the aspects of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. The explanation below are the findings during teaching and learning speaking process using cue cards which is based on the specific problem:

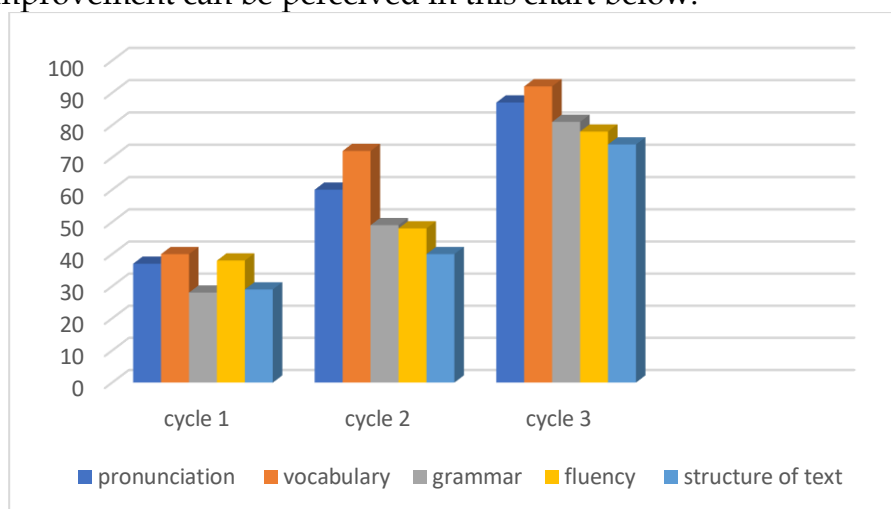
### 1. Using Cue Cards improved students' speaking in the aspects of grammar

Throughout teaching and learning process, the researcher questioned students about the problems in grammar and word orders and later, the researcher gave enlightenment about it. Again, the researcher gave them example of simple sentences. She wrote the formula on the board and requested the students to memorize the pattern in speaking naturally by showing them the cue cards. The cards were provided by questions also keywords that stimulate them to remember the lesson they had been taught. Also, the researcher used activity that correlated with grammar aspect. Those activities had the students' attention and enthusiasm to learn word orders in grammatical way.

## 2.Using Cue Cards improved students' speaking in the aspects of vocabulary

In improving the students' limited vocabulary, the researcher provided them with several task such as: match the definition and match the word. These tasks give them input about the vocabulary they were going to use while speaking. On cue card itself, it is provided by questions and keywords that stimulate students to recall the vocabulary on the tasks they had done previously. Simultaneously, by doing the task and using cue cards improve students' speaking in the aspects of vocabulary.

The improvement can be perceived in this chart below:



**Figure 3. The students Mean Score in Every Cycle**

This colorful chart showed improvement in each aspects of speaking. Gray colored log represents grammar aspect meanwhile vocabulary aspect is marked by orange colored log. It can be concluded from the first to third cycle of actions, there was improvement. The most noticeable one can be seen from the third cycle where the height of the log passed 70. In fact, there were 6 students who hadn't achieved the minimum score of achievement (KKM).

### Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study pointed that there was an enhancement by using cue cards in the teaching and learning process. The students participated actively. This results support Nasikhatur's (2013) that using cue cards gained their motivation, confidence, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. This can be concluded from the students' behavior which seemed to relish when they did the activity about the topic given using cue cards.

Moreover, in cue card itself consisted of some cues in form of questions and phrases. In line with this, Nation (2007, p. 24) stated that by giving the students some simple patterns can help them to memorize phrases and sentences productively. It is proven that by simple phrases and sentence patterns on cue cards can help the students to memorize and yet also stimulate them to recall the phrases they had learned. As mentioned above that there were difficulties related to the students' ability in oral skill. The data obtained from the observation also showed that the students had obstacles in some parts of oral descriptive text. Mostly the difficulties came from the word orders, eloquence and format of descriptive text.

Using cue cards was well-thought-out to answer the issue. Throughout the activities, cue cards were applied in the lessons. The cue cards were accustomed to the lessons material that would be learned. The researcher organized numerous cards for each meeting. The researcher mixed the application of cue cards with other associated tasks such as matching the definition and matching the words. The aims of mixing the actions was to expand the students' speaking ability. Moreover, it was also intended to provide them with suitable tasks so that they could achieve the determined goals.

The implementation of cue cards was done in three cycles. In cycle 1, some progress was noticeable in some parts i.e. vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar accuracy. Nevertheless, on the reflection it is discovered that the actions in cycle 1 had not reached all parts of speaking. The result exposed that the pupils were attracted in the use of cue cards media and the associated activities.

To solve trouble that happened in the first cycle, the researcher did the cycle 2 and 3 with some modified cue cards. Feedback and inputs were given to the students on their accomplishment on every aspect. To keep using the classroom language, the researcher mixed with different activities. As the reflection, cue cards and associated actions was effective to improve students' speaking ability in every aspect. The following discussion described the role of cue cards in improving the students' speaking ability through the process of implementation.

- a) Cue cards media were measured to be beneficial media since they could support students' in enhancing their speaking skills. The media have pictures on them. The pictures could help them as cues when they were talking. By looking directly on the pictures, the students could shape their idea easily. They did not need to visualize the object of description as they just need to describe what they see on the cards. Also, the pictures gave them information of what, when, where and how. From

those several pictures, the students could use new vocabularies and remember them easily.

- b) The students made progress on their vocabulary mastery. By doing repetition, the students were familiarized to the words related to the topic. The colorful and interesting pictures facilitated them in memorizing the vocabulary effortlessly. During the classroom activity they could learn new vocabulary from doing the associated tasks. After the implementation of the actions, the students' ability in vocabulary mastery was better than before.
- c) To make the pronunciation better, the students need more time to do practice. During the speaking practice, the teacher would say the words out loud and they students would copy what the teacher said. Also, they could learn from others. Sometimes, they gave their friends comments on how to pronounce the word correctly. The researcher also facilitated them by giving them feedback on their speaking during and after the practice time.
- d) Even though some mistakes in word order and the use of articles could be easily notified, their grammar accuracy could be said better than before. Above and beyond the researcher's explanation, the students also learned about words order by giving full attention when other students took turn in describing animals. If their friend made mistakes, the other would help by recalling or giving the clues.
- e) Explanation in sentence structure also gained huge impact on the students. They would memorize the structure and adjust to their practice easily as the teacher gave detailed explanation about it. During the teaching and learning process, the students were accustomed to the structures that are mostly used. The researcher's feedback and input were also given after the practice time to give them more understanding on the sentence structures.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, cue cards could help students better their grammar and vocabulary while speaking. During the implementation, using cue cards was accompanied by other actions i.e. use of classroom English, some tasks; filling in the blank and matching the words could also be beneficial to the students. Cue cards can help the pupils enhance their speaking since it has pictures and questions on it. These clues help the to recall the tasks the did previously. It is supported by the result of their speaking task. At first, there was not any significant improvement. They still had not achieved the

minimum score which was 75. On the other hand, cue cards gained their interests. Moreover, the practice was done in group. On second and the third actions, the improvement was becoming more noticeable. Even though there was still no student pass the minimum score but they were getting so much progress in vocabulary aspect, 11 of them mentioned nearly all correct words. On the third cycle, there was huge growth on both grammar and vocabulary. Despite 6 students were left to pass the minimum score.

However, cue cards could not work well without the teacher's and tasks' role. Cue cards can't support fully the achievement of speaking. During the observation, the researcher noticed that the participants tend to be lethargic and impassive in joining the lesson. They felt nervous and fearful of making mistakes since they had no idea about the meaning and the way to utter the English words. The tasks' role helped to minimize the students' shyness since the task offered the students something challenging and fun activities to do.

Thus, that condition has gradually changed. In order to succeed more in her research, the researcher managed to add more tasks as input for students. The tasks were in line with the topic and the cue card itself. She also designed such attractive way to do the task which was done by pair work and group to lessen their nervousness. The various tasks and attractive way of practicing can help maximize the use of cue cards. Thus, the goal would be feasible to achieve.

### **Suggestion**

Due to lack of time, the researcher was only able to do her research focusing on two aspects of speaking which are grammar and vocabulary. She strongly suggests for future research to cover other skills in English. She also encourages to give the students input before using the cue cards. Various and attractive activities are a must in order to achieve the goal.

In designing cue cards, there are some aspects that future researchers should be aware of are either keywords or questions can be applied and the pictures being used must be clear. Anticipating the students' nervousness and shyness, it is better to create relaxing English classroom environment. This can be done by grouping or pairing the students.

## REFERENCES

- Alderson J. Charles & Bachman Lyle F. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Anderson & Anderson. K (2003). *Text types in English 3*. South Yarra: MacMillan.
- Bazo, P.(2007). *Cue cards: some ideas for using them in the primary classroom*. Universities of the Canary Islands. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol XIII, No. 3, March 2007 Retrived at <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Bazo-CueCards.html>
- Brown, H. Douglas. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Longman Inc.
- Burns, Anne. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. New York: Routledge.
- Carter, Ronald & David Nunan. (2001). *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, L. Manion , L., & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research methods in education, fifth edition*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cohen, L. Manion , L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education, sixth edition*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Eliyasun. (2016). *Improving students' speaking skill through guided conversation*. Pontianak: Universitas Tanjungpura.
- Elvita, Fenny. (2012). *The effect of using cue card toward students' speaking ability at the second year of Islamic junior high school Al-hidayah of Islamic centre boarding school Kampar*. Pekanbaru: Universitas Sultan syarif Kasim.
- Farah, N.F.A. (2013). *Improving the students' English speaking skills through cue cards media at grade VII of MTsNRowokele in the academic year of 2012/2013*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
- Ferrance, E. (2000). *Action research*. Brown University
- Green, Andrew. (2011). *Becoming a reflective english teacher*. Open University Press.

- Heaton, J. B. (1988). *Writing English Language Test*. Longman. Longman Group.
- Helmawati. (2011). *Improving students' speaking ability through role play*. Pontianak: Universitas Tanjungpura.
- Harmer, Jeremy (2007). *How to teach English*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Johnson, K. & Morrow, K. (1981). *Communication in the classroom*. London: Longman.
- Hammond, Jenny. (1992). *English for special purposes*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquire University Sydney.
- Kemmis, Stephen & Mc. Taggart Robbi. (1990). *The action research planner*. Australia: Deakin University.
- Library of Congress. (2008). *Junior skills builders: writing in 15 minutes a day*. New York: Learning Express, LLC.
- Nation, I. S. P & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge, Tylor & Francis.
- Richards, Jack. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking*. Cambridge University Press.
- Smalley, R. L., Rurttten, M.K. (2001). *Refining composition skills: rhetoric and grammar*. Boston, Ma: Heinle & Heinle.
- Stanley. (1998). *Ways to writing*. New York: MacMillan.
- Thornbury, Scott. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. London: Pearson Education.
- Thresia, Fenny. (2015). *Improving students' writing ability through cue cards technique*. Universitas Muhammadiyah.
- Wardiman, et al. (2008). *English for in focus for grade VII junior high school*. Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan Department Pendidikan Nasional.
- Yesi. (2018). *Teaching speaking about local vacation experience by using cue cards*. Universitas Tanjungpura.