Utilizing the Picture Describing Strategy for Enhancing Speaking Skills in Teaching

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Abstract

This research focuses on exploring the effectiveness of the Describing Picture Strategy in teaching speaking skills to students. The study aims to enhance students' English-speaking abilities by employing visual aids such as pictures during the learning process. The qualitative research design was utilized, and data were collected through interviews and observations with an English teacher at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin. The findings demonstrate that using pictures as speaking prompts can improve pronunciation, vocabulary retention, and overall language confidence. Additionally, picture-based activities engage students and create a more enjoyable learning experience. The study recommends that English teachers integrate the Describing Picture Strategy in their teaching approaches to foster active classrooms and enhance students' interest and proficiency in speaking English. However, the research acknowledges the need for further investigation to address certain limitations and refine the strategy for optimal results.

Keywords: picture describing strategy, enhancing speaking skills, teaching

Introduction

Speaking is one of the daily language skills used as an effective communication tool that plays a crucial role in life (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Human communication is a complex process involving the exchange of information between individuals. Speakers use language to convey their thoughts and ideas, making them both listeners and speakers for effective communication.

The primary objective of teaching English is to equip students with the ability to use the language effectively and accurately for communication (Davies & Pearse, 2000; Nadia & Aditama, 2018). However, many language learners struggle with speaking skills, which are considered

one of the most challenging aspects of language learning (Hasbi, 2020; Hayati, 2017). Even after years of studying English, some students find it difficult to speak and understand the language properly (Bueno et al., 2006). To address this, teachers should employ planned strategies that allow students to feel comfortable expressing themselves in different ways (Maknun & Baiti, 2022). Some recent strategies in teaching speaking include describing pictures, using pictures in language learning, and focusing on the purpose of learning to speak.

Successful speaking involves characteristics such as active participation, high motivation, and language proficiency at an acceptable level (Sukatmi, 2015). To achieve success in speaking, teachers must use effective strategies that align with students' needs. These strategies include setting clear lesson objectives, incorporating both showing and telling in the lesson, and guiding students through tasks effectively (Farid & Yansyah, 2019).

A teacher's strategy is essential in creating a smooth and enjoyable learning process in the classroom (Taufik & Baiti, 2022). It helps ensure a systematic, effective, and purposeful teaching approach. The teacher's strategy in classroom management is closely related to the learning process, especially in language learning, including speaking skills. Speaking is a productive language skill that requires practice, and using pictures as visual aids can support and enhance the learning process.

Pictures serve multiple functions in the learning process, such as clarifying messages, increasing learning efficiency, fostering a positive attitude toward learning, and generating student motivation (Niswariyana & Muhdar, 2021). Learning through pictures is particularly effective in language acquisition as it enhances memory retention and association between images and words. This approach enables students to remember words more effectively and aids in the development of speaking skills.

The main purpose of speaking is to convey information and ideas to the listener. Speaking can serve various goals, including informing, entertaining, and persuading (Nadia & Yansyah, 2018). To facilitate ease of speaking, students should be trained in pronunciation, clarity, responsibility, and critical listening (Baiti, 2020). Speaking skills are essential for effective communication and the development of positive character values (Murtiningsih, 2018).

The author's interest in researching the subject "Describing Picture Strategy in Teaching Speaking Skills" is backed by previous research, such as Anglia Mursi's quantitative descriptive study on the use of the picture describing strategy to improve students' English-speaking skills. Another qualitative study on "Utilizing the Picture Describing Strategy for Enhancing Speaking Skills in Teaching " also explored the use of describing pictures to enhance English speaking skills.

In this study, the authors aimed to answer the research question, "How do teachers teach speaking with pictures?" They conducted tests and questionnaires to students before and after treatment using the strategy of describing images. The results suggested that using images in teaching English speaking is beneficial for motivating students, facilitating skill practice, and creating an engaging learning process. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering an active classroom environment and employing effective strategies to enhance students' speaking abilities.

Methods

1. Research Design and Participants

In this study, researchers conducted descriptive qualitative research to investigate teacher strategies in the classroom. The focus was on describing the techniques employed by teachers at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin. The aim was to analyze the ability, form, uniqueness, and variety of words used by the teacher during classroom instruction.

The study took place at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin, situated on Jalan S. Parman. The research was conducted on Saturday, 3rd December 2022. The participant in this study was an English teacher at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin, specifically Mrs. Erlina Sari, S.Pd., who teaches English to first-grade students. Mrs. Erlina is 39 years old and a graduate of Lambung Mangkurat University. She has been teaching English since 2014 and continues to do so until the present.

2. Findings

The findings of this study, based on interviews with a teacher, reveal several strategies in teaching speaking using image media that can enhance student learning outcomes and quality. The use of image media helps students understand the learning material better. The role of media significantly influences the success of the teaching and learning process, making it more engaging and attractive for students. The use of pictures can also boost students' social intelligence, especially for those who are less social. With speaking activities using image media, students engage in communicative activities through images presented by the teacher, stimulating their imagination and encouraging interaction during learning. Additionally, using pictures can make speaking activities more varied and enjoyable, especially when learning English with friends.

In teaching, there are various types of learning media, and one of the effective choices is visual media, particularly pictures. Pictures are seen through the sense of sight and can pique students' interest and engagement in the lesson. Image media supports language skills, art activities, and creative storytelling.

Image media can be effectively utilized at all stages of learning and across subjects. It aids in visualizing abstract ideas and conveying messages

more realistically to students. Additionally, image media captures students' attention, clarifies presentation of ideas, and illustrates information that might otherwise be overlooked or forgotten.

By incorporating picture media into the learning process, particularly through the "look and identify" technique, students can identify objects in pictures provided by the teacher. Following this, students engage in dialog activities with their peers, which not only develops speaking skills but also allows for assessment of their ability to identify objects correctly based on the picture's content. This approach enables the teacher to evaluate both the learning process and outcomes when using picture media for speaking activities in the classroom.

To make English learning more accessible and enjoyable, teachers must make the material as interesting as possible. Utilizing picture media is an effective way to achieve this goal. Pictures are attractive to students due to their bright colors and relevance to the students' environment, making them enthusiastic about participating in learning activities, especially when using infocus in the classroom.

By incorporating pictures, students are drawn to the objects depicted, increasing their curiosity and engagement. Communicative speaking activities can be conducted in pairs, where students dialogue in front of the class with the teacher's guidance. The

teacher allows students to predict what they see in the pictures, and then explains the content they are discussing, helping students grasp pronunciation according to the rules. The teacher can also model dialogues with students to help them identify and understand the content they observe.

Results and Discussions

Speaking through images is a unique and engaging approach to improving language skills. Visual aids help learners connect words and phrases with real-life objects or scenes, making language more concrete and easier to understand (Baiti & Zulkarnaen, 2022). Previous research by Abidin et al. (2012) highlights that speaking involves activities where students express their ideas orally under the guidance of the teacher (Guntur et al., 2023). One of the main advantages of using pictures for speaking practice is that it allows learners to focus on pronunciation and intonation, reducing the emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. This boosts learners' confidence when speaking and enhances the enjoyment of the language learning process (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020).

Moreover, pictures facilitate vocabulary building by providing context for new words and phrases. For example, images of a kitchen help learners comprehend and use cooking-related vocabulary, such as "oven," "stove," and "bowl." Additionally, visual learners benefit greatly from using pictures as speaking prompts since they

naturally think in terms of images and may retain words and phrases more effectively when associated with visuals (Resmini & Juanda, 2007).

In summary, incorporating pictures into language learning proves to be a fun and effective method to enhance language skills. It instills confidence in learners during speaking activities and fosters a more enjoyable language learning experience. As asserted by Saud & Sutarsih (2007), a professional teacher is one who can fulfill their teaching duties effectively, which includes using various learning media creatively to support the smooth progression of the learning process and achieving satisfactory learning outcomes.

Furthermore, integrating pictures into language learning enables students to grasp concepts visually, making language learning more accessible and engaging. The use of visuals helps learners associate words with concrete representations, enhancing their understanding and retention of vocabulary. Visual aids help learners make meaningful connections between new information and prior knowledge.

Additionally, pictures in language learning cater to the diverse learning styles of students. Visual learners benefit from the imagery, auditory learners connect spoken language with the visuals, and kinesthetic learners may engage in role-playing based on the pictures. This holistic approach to teaching speaking through pictures ensures that all learners can actively participate and succeed in the language learning process. Consequently, teachers should embrace the use of pictures as a valuable and versatile tool to enhance students' language proficiency and overall learning experience.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the researcher draws the following conclusions regarding "How can the teacher teach speaking with the Drawing a Picture Strategy?" This study aimed to analyze the teacher's strategy in teaching describing pictures at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin. To achieve this objective, the researcher utilized two instruments, namely observation and interview. Now, let's summarize the data obtained and draw some conclusions:

1. The researcher found that using the Drawing a Picture Strategy in teaching describing pictures is highly beneficial, particularly for students who have never learned English before. It significantly increases students' interest in learning English.

2. The teaching describing pictures strategy encountered minimal obstacles and difficulties, as there are ample sources available that can be used as teaching materials.

3. Implementing the Drawing a Picture Strategy effectively increases students' interest in learning English, indicating its

value as an engaging instructional approach.

4. To foster students' interest in learning English, teachers are encouraged to be creative in selecting learning materials and utilizing the Drawing a Picture Strategy.

Based on the outcomes of this study, several suggestions can be considered to enhance students' interest in learning English, particularly in the context of teaching describing pictures:

The researcher recommends English teachers to adopt the Example strategy as an alternative approach in teaching English, especially when teaching describing pictures. The teacher's role is crucial in creating an active classroom atmosphere, and using pictures as a teaching aid effectively motivates students and facilitates skill practice.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that this research has some limitations concerning media usage, time constraints, the learning process, sample size, and the focus on teaching describing pictures. As a result, future researchers are encouraged to address these limitations and further explore the topic.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of the Drawing a Picture Strategy in teaching describing pictures and its positive impact on students' interest in learning English. By considering the suggested recommendations and overcoming the study's limitations, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding and improvement of teaching strategies for language learning.

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