

Voluntary Reading and Narrative Speaking Instructional Strategies to Enhance Students' Speaking Ability

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This research aimed at investigating classroom strategies to encourage students' participation in speaking activity. Specifically, the study addressed three research questions: 1) what are the strategies to help students encounter difficulty in speaking English in classroom, 2) to what extent does voluntary reading prior speaking activity help students develop ideas and motivation to speaking English in the classroom, 3) does the application of narrative speaking strategy in speaking classroom affect students' speaking achievement? The participants of the research were students at Al Azhar 28 Islamic Junior Secondary School aged 13 to 14 who joined English extracurricular program. A mix method design combining two research strands, qualitative and quantitative, was adopted. The data were collected through multiple methods: speaking test, focus group interview, and observation. The study showed positive finding. Based on the qualitative data drawn, doing a voluntary reading could diminish students' anxieties in speaking, decrease speaking block, increase students' motivation to do good speaking task, and improve students' social awareness. Meanwhile, the narrative speaking fostered students' speaking fluencies, grammar accuracy, pronunciation, and knowledge measured through observations and speaking rubrics to achieve the data analysis. The result showed there was significant improvement on students' speaking skill shown by significance or p-value < 0.001 or less than $\alpha = 0.05$ with standard deviation of the pretest was 3.70 and posttest was 3.96.

Keywords: voluntary reading, speaking skill, teaching and learning speaking, conference publications

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengukur strategi – strategi yang diterapkan di dalam kelas sebagai upaya meningkatkan keberanian murid berpartisipasi aktif dalam pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Secara khusus, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab tiga pertanyaan penelitian : 1) Strategi apakah yang dapat digunakan untuk membantu murid yang mengalami kesulitan berbicara

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menggunakan Bahasa Inggris di kelas. 2) Seberapa jauh peranan strategi pembelajaran Voluntary Reading dalam membantu murid mengembangkan motivasi berbicara berbahasa Inggris? 3) Apakah penerapan strategi Narrative Speaking mempengaruhi kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Inggris murid? Peserta yang dilibatkan dalam penelitian ini adalah murid – murid SMP Islam Al Azhar 28 Cibinong yang berusia 13 hingga 14 tahun yang mengikuti program ekstrakurikuler English Club. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk menjawab tiga pertanyaan penelitian yang telah disebutkan sebelumnya. Data penelitian ini diambil dari berbagai metode yaitu test berbicara, interview berkelompok, dan observasi. Penelitian ini menghasilkan beberapa penemuan yang positif yaitu : Pertama, berdasarkan hasil data kualitatif, penerapan strategi Voluntary Reading ini dapat mengurangi kekhawatiran atau ketegangan yang dialami murid ketika berbicara menggunakan Bahasa Inggris, mengurangi Speaking block yaitu keadaan dimana tiba-tiba si pembicara kehilangan ide yang akan ia sampaikan, meningkatkan motivasi murid untuk mengerjakan tugas berbahasa Inggris dengan baik dan meningkatkan kepedulian sosial murid. Sedangkan narrative speaking meningkatkan kelancaran berbicara berbahasa Inggris, meningkatkan kemampuan grammar secara akurat, pengucapan kata yang baik dan pengetahuan akan isi dari materi yang dibicarakan yang diukur melalui observasi dan speaking rubrics atau standar penilaian berbicara untuk memperoleh analisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan yang berarti atau signifikan pada kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Inggris murid yang ditunjukkan oleh nilai signifikansi dari p value < 0.001 atau kurang dari 0.05 dengan standar deviasi yang dihasilkan oleh pretest sebesar 3.70 dan posttest sebesar 3.96

INTRODUCTION

Once students are asked to do English Public speaking, they might experience speaking ‘deficiency.’ Such conditions as being anxious, uncomfortable feelings of nervousness, being afraid of making mistakes, or even foolish in front of others may attack the speakers. Besides, vocabulary limitation, lack of practices and adequate content or knowledge, low spirit and willingness due to limited English exposure also play significant roles to speaking deficiency (Liu, 2009). Even though these conditions are normal, it is important to create strategies in dealing with these problems (Thomas, 2006). Reading activity and speaking practices can be a solution to solve the speaking problem. Reading equips the readers with knowledge of the world. Having adequate knowledge and practicing regularly makes students confident to speak.

Therefore, there were two strategies investigated in this study: 1) Voluntary Reading (VR) and 2) Narrative Speaking (NS). VR is an activity when a person, in this case a student, chooses his own books to read and to share his ideas of what he has read. VR conducted prior to an English narrative public speaking is expected to diminish students’ anxiety that makes the listeners mostly focus on negative thoughts of the speakers’ performance such as avoiding eye contact, poor gesture, hesitant speech, and strained vocal (Hamilton, 2015). The following paragraphs will describe both strategies in more details.

There are some researchers who have investigated VR. A study on the comparison between VR and Traditional Reading Program known as *In School - Reading Program* found that 51 out of 54 students who did VR performed better than those doing traditional reading (Krashen, 2004). Krashen adds that VR as a pleasant reading activity does not only develop literacy and language competences such as grammar, writing skills, and reading comprehension but also help the readers get more ideas and information from the books. In addition, children who started reading at early age could develop better literacy.

There are some principles to run VR. First, it is a joyful reading activity that gives the readers opportunity to choose the books they would like to read. Meanwhile, teachers, in this condition, become the facilitators that equip and ensure the availability of the books stocks. Second, even though the class can be the start of the reading, most reading activities are conducted outside the classroom to achieve the joyful of reading. (Tella & Issa, 2012). Third, students start telling their experiences in VR sessions by exposing the beginning section, running the middle part of the story they are presenting, and come up to the conclusion. (Jaffe, 2011).

Krashen (2003) proposes three kinds of Free VR steps the students should follow. The first step is sustained silent reading. It is the time when students are free to select books they love to read. Furthermore, along with the teachers, they read them every day for certain minutes regularly. The second step is self-selected reading. In this step, students share and discuss the reading content to the teachers. The last step is extensive reading. In this stage students develop their linguistic knowledge and share the knowledge or messages achieved from the texts by making a summary.

The second strategy is Narrative Speaking (NS). It is the activity when a person tells his own personal or others' experiences by incorporating the special things in the story (Verderber & Sellnow, 2011). In addition, the speakers or story tellers usually do flashback taken from a past event, experience, or activity scene during NS.

There are some points to highlight in NS. First, it is crucial to ensure the speakers and audiences how "tellable" the speaking is to engage the speech smoothly. Second, evaluation is also important to deliver during or after the speech. Evaluation can be given internally or externally. Internal evaluation is delivered by embedding questions or thought of the narrator. Meanwhile, external evaluation is run by giving some questions or comments during the speech (Macaulay, 1990). Moreover, NS itself is expected to help student strengthen their speaking skills by measuring their fluency and pronunciation, grammar accuracy, and content.

METHODS

The study was conducted at SMP Islam (Islamic Junior Secondary School) Al Azhar 28 Bogor. The participants were students aged 13-14 who joined English club extracurricular program. The participants were 11 males and 4 females. Their English proficiency ranged from fairly good to very good based on the English score school report.

A mix method design combining two research strands, qualitative and quantitative was adopted to address the three research questions: 1) What are the strategies to help students encounter difficulty in speaking English in classroom, 2) To what extent does VR prior to speaking activity help students develop ideas and motivation to speaking English in the classroom, and 3) Does the application of NS strategy in speaking classroom affect students'

speaking achievement? The data were collected through multiple methods: speaking test, focus group interview, and observation.

VR in this research was conducted based on the Krashen steps mentioned above. The researchers took three cycles in order to meet what Len Almond called 'containable time' (Elliot, 1991). VR which the researcher investigated were done in Indonesian because VR was aimed to train students encountering anxieties during the public speaking. So, English was not definitely emphasized in this session. However, to measure students' speaking capability, NS was conducted when the whole VR cycles were finished. The following discusses steps of each cycle clearly.

In the first cycle - sustained silent reading - students read some books of their own interest. They were free to read the books provided in the library or the books they brought from home. The researcher gave 15 minutes to read the books before the lesson started. Even though the students read Indonesian books, they should share the ideas or messages in English in the second and third steps: self-selected and extensive reading.

In the self-selected step, students continued the activity by doing English conferences and discussions with the teacher as the researcher and the facilitator. The activities emphasized in the conferences were 1) students switched the Indonesian language from the books they read to English, and 2) they told the teacher the story or messages they had read previously. This process was done orally.

In the extensive reading of the first cycle, students summarized what they had read in the form of synopsis. The teacher facilitated students with what they called literacy tree. The synopsis of the books was written on a piece of paper to stick on the tree. Furthermore, unlike the first cycle, the format of the second cycle was slightly different. The first cycle was done individually. Conversely, the second cycle was done in groups. Students were free to choose their own partners to work in groups with the maximum members three students. During the second cycle of sustained silent reading, students were free to read books they got from the school library or home.

Meanwhile, during the second cycle of self-selected process, students shared the ideas of reading content to their friends in the same group. This process was done in English. Teacher facilitated and helped students address their English speaking difficulties and share the ideas of reading contents to their friends orally. During this sessions, teachers did some observations. The third cycle was slightly done differently in every steps of it. In sustained silent reading, students chose some books. At this time, the 15 books were provided by the schools. Students were free to choose what books they liked to read.

Other differences appeared from the side of audiences who listened to the students' story. In this cycle, self-selected was underwent by giving the students opportunity to share the stories they read to the students of different school. The nearest school, *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI or Islamic Junior Secondary School) Al Khairiyah was chosen. The purposes were (1) developing students' social awareness, (2) training them to do first public speaking in front of the strangers, and (3) helping students encounter anxiety problems faced during the speaking time. This session was done in Indonesian language. However, even though it was done in Indonesian, some practices were important to undergo. The practices were mostly handled on how to read books in front of other people, how to minimize anxieties, and how to share ideas smoothly in Indonesian language.

The last steps were conducting extensive reading, in which the students made a presentation on their experiences in telling the reading stories before students of another school, teachers, and seniors. This session was done in English and in the form of NS. Students performed their first NS in front of the researcher who took this activity as the pre-test.

The second strategy is NS. If voluntary speaking was done to overcome anxiety problems, NS was undergone to see and measure students' English-speaking skills. To strengthen the research, the first cycle of NS was conducted by asking students to present what they have done the different school. In this strategy, students worked in the group of 3 to tell their experiences in front of the researcher. Meanwhile, the researcher took this first cycle as the pre-test. Speaking rubrics consisting of grammar, pronunciation, fluency, organization and content measurements is used as the research instrument. Having done the first cycle, the teacher as researcher gave feedback during reflection sessions.

In the second cycle, students did the second narrative speaking in front of the teacher and their friends followed by another reflection afterwards. Finally, the third cycle was conducted to test students' speaking improvement whether they had minimized the speaking problems or not. The third narrative speaking cycle was done in front of parents of the English club members. There were some reasons why parents were invited as the audiences of the students' NS. First, students were trained to reach the higher level in overcoming the anxiety problems. Doing public speaking in front of parents gave different experiences. Moreover, teachers took the post-test for speaking during the third cycle narrative process involving two collaborators to measure the students' speaking skills. The collaborators were the researchers' colleagues and bilingual teachers, who were also good in speaking English.

To measure the result, an integrated rubric was set up based on grammar accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, organization, and knowledge with the range score from 2 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest) for each description. Even though students performed in group of three, the post test score was taken individually. Each member of the group should inform certain part of the presentation and get two questions from the audiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, the data were collected through multiple methods: speaking test, focus group interview, and observation. The quantitative data was measured using SPSS 20. Since the research measured the effect of NS to students' speaking skill quantitatively, hypothesis was drawn as follows: H_{01} (there was no significant effect of NS strategy on students' speaking skills) and H_{i1} (there was significant effect of NS strategy on students' speaking skills).

Furthermore, the result showed that there was significant improvement on students' speaking skill shown by significance or p-value was <0.001 or less than $\alpha = 0.05$ with standard deviation of the pretest was 3.70 and posttest was 3.96 as shown on the following table which means H_0 was rejected. In other words, NS gives significant effect on students' speaking skills. See table 3.1 for details.

Table 1. Paired sample test

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	P Value

Pre-test	15.60	3.70	10	20	< 0.001
Post-test	17.87	3.96	10	23	

The qualitative data were examined through speaking rubrics involving grammar accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation (Vera, 2012). Meanwhile, organization and content were also included to see whether students were able to present or understand what they were sharing well. With regard to focus group interview and observation, the findings show as follows:

All students agreed that anxiety was the hardest things come while doing narrative speaking or presentation.

“I felt hesitate doing narrative speaking as my teacher instructed. I felt anxious and I think I lost my self-confidence” (Participant #Aq)

“I was too shy and lost my confidence” (participant #Ck)

“Very nervous at the first time. I didn’t know what to say and almost forget all words I have practiced. But then I tried hard” (Participant #Rf)

“I don’t know why I always feel nervous speaking in front of people” (Participant #Ai)

“I feel ashamed talking in front of the class and in front of new people I have not met before. Maybe this performance (on this study) can help me diminish the shy feelings” (participant #Hk)

90 % students agreed that they had vocabulary difficulties that elicit “speaking deficiency”.

“I understand the questions the audiences gave but I don’t know how to answer in English” (Participant #Nf)

“I answer but a little bit hesitate because I’m not sure with the vocabulary” (participant #Zf)

“I think I need to read a lot of books to improve my vocabulary” (Participant # Ai)

“I know my vocabularies are very limited, that is why I try to consult dictionaries for every new word” (Participant # Va)

10% participants said that they had no problems with vocabularies.

“I love reading English, that is the reason why my language improves well and I have no problems with vocabularies” (Participant #Dk)

“I think I do not have any problems in speaking because I remember lots of vocabularies” (participant #Hf)

In relation to Voluntary Reading, all students agreed that Voluntary Reading decreased anxiety.

“It’s very useful because it can decrease the anxious feelings. After doing voluntary reading I can stand bravely in front of parents while doing narrative speaking” (Participant #Al)

“By reading books in front of others over and over, I can manage my anxious feelings better” (participant #Ck)

“Very good activities because I am accustomed to meeting and speaking in front of other people” (Participan #Hk)

“At the first time I felt ashamed and hesitated to read in Voluntary Reading Activities especially in Madrasah Al Khairiyah. But, when I saw the students laughing and giving funny expressions to my reading, I felt so happy” (Participant # Dk)

All students agreed that voluntary reading conducted in another school develops students’ social awareness.

“When my teacher told us to join voluntary reading in Madrasah Al Khairiyah, I was a bit shocked because I do not have any self-confidence. But when I saw the school and students’ conditions, I realized that I have to perform the best for them” (Participant #Ck)

“I am sad to see the building of the school we visited, I think I will be ok if I visit the school again later” (Participants # zf)

80 % students agreed Voluntary Reading developed their cognitive skill.

“When I read about how a blind man walked, I could understand how they survived in life” (Participant # Al)

“I did not only read books but also prepared the answer of questions delivered by the audiences” (Participants # Ir)

All students agreed that narrative speaking done in three cycles help them improving their English skill.

“It was good activity because It was done several times, I can prepare the words I would like to say”(Participant #Al)

“I was afraid of how to do narrative speaking in front of parents. But after doing several narrative speaking, I feel more confident and feel better” (Participant #Ck)

“Having done some practices in narrative 1 and 2, I can do better in narrative speaking 3” (Participant #Aq)

Detailed interview results were summed up in the following table.

Table 2. Interview results

No	Participant	Anxiety attacks the speaker	Vocabulary limitation problems	Voluntary Reading give significant positive effect	Narrative Speaking gives significant positive effect
1.	Aq	√	X	√	√
2	Ai	√	√	√	√
3	Hk	√	X	√	√
4	Dk	√	X	√	√
5	Al	√	√	√	√
6	Ty	√	√	√	√

7	Ck	√	√	√	√
8	Va	√	√	√	√
9	Hf	√	√	√	√
10	Ah	√	√	√	√
11	Ar	√	√	√	√
12	Nf	√	√	√	√
13	Ir	√	√	√	√
14	Zf	√	√	√	√
15	Rf	√	√	√	√

The researcher also did observations to collect more data. The observations were taken from both voluntary reading and narrative speaking process in cycle 1 to cycle 3. The observation was sum up on table 3 and 4 below.

Table 3. VR observation result from cycle 1 (students chose the books from library or home done individually)

No	Participant	Motivation to Read	Interest in choosing the books	Motivation to share Ideas
1.	Aq	High	High	Average
2	Ai	Low	Very low	Very low
3	Hk	High	Very high	High
4	Dk	High	High	Average
5	Al	High	High	Low
6	Ty	Average	Average	Average
7	Ck	Very high	Very high	Very High
8	Va	Average	Average	Average
9	Hf	Very High	Very High	Very High
10	Ah	Average	Average	High
11	Ar	High	High	High
12	Nf	Very high	Very high	Average
13	Ir	Average	Average	Average
14	Zf	Low	Average	Average
15	Rf	Average	Average	High

The table above shows that there were 8 students who were highly motivated in reading the books, and 8 students were enthusiastic to choose the books they got from the library or home based on their own interest. However, only 6 people who loved sharing ideas individually in front of their friends.

Table 4. VR observation results from Cycle II (students chose the books from library or home and do voluntary reading in groups)

No	Participant	Motivation to Read	Interest in choosing the books	Motivation to share Ideas
1.	Aq	High	High	High
2	Ai	Average	High	Average
3	Hk	High	Very high	High
4	Dk	High	High	Very high
5	Al	High	High	High
6	Ty	Average	Average	High
7	Ck	Very high	Very high	Very High
8	Va	Average	Average	Average
9	Hf	Very High	Very High	Very High
10	Ah	Average	High	High
11	Ar	High	High	High
12	Nf	Very high	Very high	High
13	Ir	High	High	High
14	Zf	High	High	High
15	Rf	Average	Average	High

The table above shows that there were 10 students who were highly motivated in reading the books and 12 students were enthusiastic to choose the books they got from the library or home based on their own interest. Moreover, 13 out of 15 people loved sharing ideas in groups in front of their friends.

Table 5. VR observation results from cycle III (students chose the books provided from the researcher and do voluntary reading in groups before students of another school)

No	Participant	Motivation to Read	Interest in choosing the books	Motivation to share Ideas
1.	Aq	High	High	High
2	Ai	Average	High	High
3	Hk	High	High	High
4	Dk	Low	Low	Very high
5	Al	High	Low	High
6	Ty	Average	High	High
7	Ck	High	Low	Very High
8	Va	Average	Average	High
9	Hf	Average	High	Very High
10	Ah	Average	Low	High
11	Ar	High	High	High
12	Nf	High	High	High
13	Ir	High	Low	High
14	Zf	Low	Low	High
15	Rf	Average	High	High

The table above shows that there were 7 students who were highly motivated in reading the books provided by the teacher, and 8 students were enthusiastic. Moreover, all participants

loved sharing ideas in front of the students of another school. The previous descriptions showed that students prefer to use the book based on their interests or their own private collections. Meanwhile, they do not show high interest in doing individual voluntary reading. On the other hand, observations done in narrative speaking captured the students' vocabulary limitation. Findings of the observation show that students got a lot of difficulties in speaking due to their vocabulary limitation especially when they were at the first and second cycle. Even though they did not do perfect performance at the last cycle, however, it was clear that they had better performance than the previous cycles.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the application of VR and NS strategies to develop students' speaking skills. VR can give pleasure activity, minimize students' anxiety in speaking in front of other people, develop students' cognitive skills by giving students opportunities to choose the reading materials, and opportunity to share the reading ideas or messages to other people.

Some important findings can be drawn from the study. First, VR is an appropriate activity to do before NS as it prepares the students to get accustomed to speaking in public, diminishes speaking anxieties, and develops students' cognitive skill. Second, both VR and NS develop students' social interaction and awareness through group works. It can be seen from the observation in which students become more enthusiastic in working in groups and share ideas with other students. On the other hand, NS conducted after VR gave more English speaking practices to develop speaking skills (grammar, pronunciation, fluency, content and organization). As the result, there was significant effect of NS to students' speaking skills shown from the pre-post test result comparison.

Some points need considering. First, it will be better if the books prepared for VR were English story books. By having English story books students have more English exposure to develop their skills. Second, there should be time allocation analysis to conduct the similar research. This research took for months; as a result, students sometimes feel bored doing the same thing over and over.

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