The Use of Flashcards and Real Objects as Teaching Media for Teaching English Speaking to Young Learners

Vitha Ama Matuate

English Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business
University of Widya Dharma Pontianak
Email: *vitha_ama@widyadharma.ac.id*

Abstract

     Flashcards and real objects are two kinds of teaching media used for English teaching to improve the students' speaking skills. In English teaching and learning, speaking is one of the skills that is difficult to master for young learners. By using flashcards and real objects as teaching media, students could learn English in attractive and fun ways. In this research, the researcher wants to see the effectiveness of using flashcards and real objects as teaching media to mixed-class students. This research was conducted during the community service activity held by the English Department, University of Widya Dharma Pontianak. There were six students who participated in this community service. Those students are mixed from the first to third grades of elementary school. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods since it is more about how to implement the use of flashcards and real objects as the teaching media for English speaking. The learning activities plan is carried out in four steps, namely preparation, observation and treatment, and reflection. In the learning activities, the researcher uses flashcards and real objects in the introductions and drilling sessions of the meetings. To sum up, the use of flashcards and real objects in teaching English speaking can increase the students' interest in learning English and motivate them to be confident in speaking English. The teaching and learning process became more interesting and fun since the activities conducted mostly used simple approaches (identification, mentioning the names of the flashcards and real objects, and questions and answers) and physical activities (learning to speak through games using flashcards and real objects).

Keywords: *flashcards, real objects, teaching media, teaching speaking*

INTRODUCTION

     In language learning, there are four skills that need to be mastered by the students. Those skills include listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Speaking skills, as one of the acts of language learning, allow speakers to share information through communication and express one person's ideas and feelings to another (Efransyah, 2020). Interaction between teacher and students in class demonstrates that speaking skills are important in delivering information and knowledge in learning activities (Sari, 2018). Based on Depdiknas (2006, as mentioned in Sinaga & Oktaviani 2020), oral communication competence, or listening and speaking, is the goal of English learning in elementary schools. This shows that English speaking skills are needed in order to prepare the students to face the changes of the world. It is essential since English is a priority for many second and foreign language learners (Nunan, 2013).

     Teachers need to be more creative in finding good and effective ways of teaching, especially the ways that focus on speaking skills. Teaching speaking is better to be taught from a very young age. However, it is not easy to teach speaking to young learners. It is because the learning styles of young learners are different from those of older learners. Besides that, students also have different learning characteristics (Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Harmer (2007), as mentioned in Supriati, Mahayanti and Kusuma (2018), said that young learners'

learning ways are interfered with by their characteristics, such as their well-being response to their own lives and themselves as the classroom topic. Besides, they also get great pleasure in doing something that is fun for them.

According to Prayatni (2019), there are some benefits to teaching young learners: (1) The earlier you learn the language, the better your language proficiency; (2) learners can get the opportunity to have native-like pronunciation since they can have some improvement. (3) the acquisition of a lifelong ability to communicate with others; and, finally, a better understanding of other cultures. Here, the teacher needs to be creative in bridging the students' experience in their daily activities and the focus of the learning materials. Besides that, the teacher should find a way to gain the students' interest in learning English and needs to have good teaching preparation unless the student fails in speaking. Teachers need to be aware of the teaching speaking challenges. For example, one of them is the challenge of how to make the students keep using English in their speaking. It is because the students are more comfortable using their mother tongue as their speaking language in English-speaking classes and have a lack of English vocabulary.

The teaching preparation can be started by choosing the right teaching media for the teaching and learning process. In the English teaching and learning process, teaching media is a tool that can help the teacher with delivering the learning materials. According to Wahyudin and Rido (2020), using teaching media in the classroom has some advantages that are relevant to the students' characteristics. This shows that teaching media can be helpful, especially in improving the students' motivation in learning English (Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2020). There are three types of teaching media, namely audio, visual, and audio-visual (Supriati, Mahayanti, & Kusuma, 2018). Teaching media in the form of audio could be in the form of recording audio and music. Visual media is in the form of pictures or photos. For audio-visual, the examples of this media are in the form of slides, film strips, films, and videos.

According to Arsyad (2009), there are some basic criteria for teaching media. Teaching media (1) has a physical meaning as hardware and can be seen, heard, and touched using the five senses; (2) has a non-physical meaning as software; (3) emphasizes visual and audio media; (4) teaching media is a tool to help the teaching-learning process both inside and outside of class; (5) teaching media can be used widely; and (6) can be used for communication between teacher and students in teaching and learning process. Based on the explanation, it showed that teaching media related to the learning method, techniques, and the ways the learning material is delivered in teaching-learning activities.

In this research, the focus is more on the use of two visual media in English teaching. Using flashcards and real objects are two of the alternatives that can be used by the teacher teaching. Since this research is more focused on speaking skills, flashcards and real objects are used as the communication media in the learning process. A flash card is a card which usually contains pictures and words that a teacher can hold up for students to use (Harmer, 2007). It is useful for vocabulary introduction, drilling grammar, and sentence production. The other media used in this research is real objects. Soulier (1981) defines real objects as things that can be seen in daily life. The objects can be easier to find in the environment. Real objects are used to give some learning experiences using real objects in the learning process. That is why using real objects in the learning process is highly recommended since the students get a better understanding of the learning material (Patau, 2020).

Based on the explanation above, both flashcards and real objects could be used in an English-speaking activity. By presenting the learning focus in the form of visual media, flashcards and real objects could gain the students' confidence in speaking, even in simple sentence production. In this research, the researcher focused on improving the students' speaking skills using flashcards and real objects through some simple learning activities for young learners. The teacher gained some information about the students' abilities, problems, and needs in learning English and then conducted the learning in 3 meetings.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted during the English Department community service of University of Widya Dharma Pontianak. It was held at Bunda Pengharapan Orphanage, Sungai Raya, West Kalimantan. It was the place where the community service of the English Department of Widya Dharma was held. The meeting was conducted 3 times for English learning. The research method is descriptive qualitative research. The population of this research are the first, second and third graders of Bunda Pengharapan Orphanage Children, Sungai Raya, West Kalimantan. The samples of this research are 6 students which are 3 third graders, 2 second graders, and 1 first grader of elementary school students who live in Bunda Pengharapan Orphanage. The procedure of data analysis was using four procedures. Those procedures were preparation, observation, treatments based on the teaching plan in every meeting, and reflection.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations of 6 students in Bunda Pengharapan Orphanage, the use of flashcards and real objects in teaching English went well. The students were enthusiastic about completing the learning activities. They also show their enthusiasm for learning English. Most of the students were confident enough in delivering their speaking though they still needed guidance in their actions. There were some objectives that were set by the researcher for the English-speaking learning process. The learning activities that were developed include being able to identify the picture on the flashcard or real objects; being more interested in learning English; being able to correctly mention the name of the flashcards or real objects; being able to make simple sentences based on the flashcards and real objects; and being confident in speaking English. The learning materials provided by the researcher were based on the familiar topics by the students. The use of flashcards and real objects as the teaching media were applied in three meetings of the English Department community service. Each meeting lasted 120 minutes with various kinds of activities, including English learning. Each of the meetings had different kinds of topics. At the first meeting, students learn about shapes and colors. At the second meeting, students learned about parts of the body; at the third meeting, students learned about the things around them.

The use of flashcards and real objects was done in four procedures, namely; the preparation, the observation, the treatment, and the reflection. In preparation, the researcher gained some information about the students' speaking abilities, problems, needs, and other information about the learning materials that they had from their orphanage guardians. After that, the researcher prepared the learning material by customizing it to the students' needs. Then, the researcher also prepared the learning materials and planned the activities for the lesson. It was decided that each meeting of the English learning would contain three sessions, namely the introduction, the drilling, and the procedure session. The use of flashcards and real objects in the meetings is used more in the introduction and the drilling sessions. The purpose was to gain the students' interest in starting the meeting and increase their memorization of English vocabulary. Besides that, students are introduced to grammar in drilling sessions. The details of the learning material and plan were as follows:

Table 1. Learning Materials

Meetings	Topic	Vocabularies	Grammar
First Meeting	Shape and colors	**Shapes:** Love Triangle Rectangle Circle Star Square	What shape is it? It is triangle

		Color: Blue Green Brown Red Pink White Black Purple Yellow Grey Violet Orange	What is the color of the triangle? It is red
Second Meeting	Parts of the body	**Parts of the body:** Head Shoulder Knees Toes Eyes Ears Nose Mouth	Touch your head! What is this? This is my head
Third Meeting	Things around us	**Objects:** Table Chair Doll Carpet Window Door Lamp Clock Book Pen Pencil	What is it? It is a table What is the shape of the table? It is rectangle What is the color of the table? It is brown

Table 2. Details of the learning activities

1st Meeting	
Sessions	**Treatments (Teaching Activities)**
Introduction Session (Observation an introduction)	• Greetings • Asking the students' condition that day • Teacher and students' introduction • Flashcards introduction: Shapes and Colors
Drilling Session	• Playing "guessing" game (Simple game for vocabulary memorization) • QnA using real objects around the class.
Production session	Assignment
2nd Meeting	
Session	**Teaching Activities**
Introduction Session	• Greetings • Asking the students' condition that day • Review the last learning material • Flashcards introduction: parts of the body

Drilling Session	- Playing "What's missing" game (Simple game for vocabulary memorization.) - Singing "head shoulder knees and toes" - Drilling review: Touch parts of the body and doing QnA
Production session	Assignment
3rd Meeting	
Session	**Teaching Activities**
Introduction Session	- Greetings - Asking the students' condition that day - Review the last learning material - Flashcards introduction: Things around us
Drilling Session	- Playing "Tap game" and "point game" (Simple game for vocabulary memorization.) - QnA using flashcards and real objects around the class.
Production session	Assignment

At the beginning of the first meeting, the researcher conducted an observation to see the students' abilities in understanding the instruction and also their abilities in English speaking. The students were asked to introduce themselves in English, and the researcher asked some questions about them. Three of them were good and confident in introducing themselves in front of their friends but had difficulties delivering the answers to some simple questions. Two of the students were shy in delivering their introduction and needed guidance in answering the questions. The last student had some difficulties introducing himself since he did not know how to introduce himself in English. The researcher helped him to increase his confidence in speaking.

In the introduction session of the first meeting, the researcher introduced the learning material about colors, shapes, and size. The researcher introduces the learning material using the flashcards by showing the cards one by one and asking the students to identify the flashcards. The students were asked to mention the name of the picture correctly. Then, the researcher gave feedback on some mispronunciations or errors made by the students. At the end of the introduction session, the researcher asked the students to mention the names of all the flashcards. After several actions of the flashcard's introduction, the researcher strengthens the students' memory of the learning material in a drilling session.

In drilling session, the researcher asked the students to play a game using flashcards. The game's name is a guessing game where the students need to guess the flashcard. In this activity, the researcher showed small parts of a picture on the flashcard and asked the students to guess what the picture was. The teacher did the same thing with all the cards. Then, at the end of the drilling activity, the researcher did a question-and-answer activity by using the real objects around the class in order to identify the shape and color of the objects. The researcher also guides the students to answer it in a long or complete answer. In the production session, the researcher asked the students to do a drawing assignment. They were asked to draw a person using the shapes they had learned. In the beginning, the teacher gave an example so the

students understood the assignment. After they finished their assignment, the students colored the shapes using crayons. At the end of the production session, the researcher asked questions to every student and asked about the shapes and colors based on the results of their assignments.

In the second meeting, the researcher reviewed the previous learning material. The researcher reviews the learning material based on the assignment in the last meeting as the connection between the last meeting and the second meeting. The topic for the second meeting is parts of the body. In the introduction session, the researcher showed the flashcards and asked the students to correctly identify parts of the body in English. The researcher also gave feedback on some mispronunciations or errors made by the students. In a drilling session, the students played the "What's Missing" game. In this game, the researcher took one flashcard and hid it from the students. Then, the students guessed what the picture was by looking at the rest of the flashcards. The researcher asked the students to participate in the game by asking them to lead the game in turns.

Next, the researcher asked the students to sing the "head, shoulders, knees, and toes" song. The end of the drilling session is a question-and-answer activity where the researcher touches one body part of one student and asks the student the name of it. Then, the teacher guides the students to answer in complete answers. In the production session, the researcher asked the students to complete an assignment. This assignment contained a picture of a boy and a girl. The students were asked to color the body and give the names of some body parts in English. Finally, the researcher asked a question to every student about parts of the body based on the result of the student's assignment.

In the third meeting, the learning material is about the things or objects around the students. The researcher introduced the names of things by distributing flashcards to the students containing pictures of things that were familiar to them. The pictures were of some objects that could be found around the class. Each of the students got one flashcard. One student showed the picture and asked the other student about it. The other students guessed the flashcard and got feedback on their pronunciation from the researcher. Then, they did the activity in turn. In the end, the researcher asked the students to mention the name of the flashcards one by one.

In the drilling session, the researcher asked the students to play "tap game." In this game, the researcher put all the flashcards on the floor and gave the instruction to tap the card that was mentioned by the researcher. After the students tap the flashcard, they mention the name of the object in a full sentence. For example, it is a table. Then, the researcher led the students to do the same thing in turn. For the second drilling activity, the researcher asked the students to play "point game." In this game, the researcher uses real objects as the game. The researcher asked the students to point out the real objects that they had learnt from the flashcards and mention the names of the objects around them in a complete sentence. The researcher also gave some feedback on the errors made by the students. At the end of the drilling session, the researcher conducted the question-and-answer activity. The researcher asked the students about the name, shape, color, and number of the object. The researcher also guided the students to answer with complete answers. In the production session, the researcher asked the students to draw five objects and write the names of the objects in English correctly. Then, the students were asked to color the objects. At the end of the production session, the researcher asked each of the students some questions related to the assignment results they had completed.

Based on the activities above, it is shown that using flashcards and real objects in the introduction and drilling sessions is a good strategy for teaching English speaking. Both of those media were effective in building the interaction between the teacher and the students. Besides as teaching, both flashcards and real objects provide the experience of learning English using sensory impressions, namely, speaking, hearing, touching, pointing, and manipulating

items. The use of flashcards as the teaching media can make the instruction more interesting. The use of flashcards and real objects could increase the student's interest in learning, especially in learning speaking. Students became excited to see the pictures on the flashcards and show the real objects that they found around them. By having simple and interesting instructions, the students could enjoy the learning activities.

The learning activities can also be varied. For example, the use of flashcards and real objects in simple games. This can be an alternative for teachers to make interesting learning activities just by using flashcards and real objects. The students could learn English in a fun and attractive way. Besides that, they could also improve their English speaking skills without having to endure monotonous class activities.

Learning materials presented in the learning activities can be easily understood by the students. Students would easily grasp the main focus of the learning material. In this research, the learning materials are more focused on some vocabulary and grammar related to the learning topics. Lastly, the researcher could also use the teaching media to check the students' pronunciation when speaking. The students would get feedback from the researcher and fix their pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, teachers must be better prepared to teach English speaking to young learners. The teachers need to be creative in creating an alternative method for teaching speaking in order to get the most effective way to deliver the learning materials. This can help the students easily understand the learning material. Flashcards and real objects can be a good alternative to gain the students' interest and confidence in improving their speaking skills. The flashcards that are used in speaking contain some pictures of the learning vocabulary. Meanwhile, some of the real objects used in the speaking are familiar to the students. Based on the findings above, it is very clear that the students can improve their speaking skills using flashcards and real objects in teaching media. These media are easily integrated into teaching and learning activities and have emerged as one of the most appealing methods of delivering learning materials. The students show positive responses and improved speaking skills to the use of flashcards and real objects in their learning activities.

REFERENCES

Depdiknas, (2006). Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.

Efransyah, E. (2020). Connotative Meaning In The Proverbs Of The Besemah Language (A Sematic Study). *Project (Professional Journal Of English Education)*, *3*(1), 143-148.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson longman.

Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. Boston: McGraw Hill

Patau, S. A. (2020). The Use of Realia in Teaching Speaking. *Sintuwu Maroso Journal of English Teaching*, *3*(1), 27-32.

Prayatni, I. (2019). Teaching english for young learners. *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan*, *4*(2), 106-110.

Sari, F. M. (2018). Patterns of Teaching-Learning Interaction in the EFL Classroom. *Teknosastik: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra, 16*(2), 41-48.

Sinaga, R. R. F., & Oktaviani, L. (2020). The Implementation of Fun Fishing to Teach Speaking for Elementary School Students. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, *1*(1), 1-6.

Soulier, J. S. (1981). *Real objects and models* (No. 12). Educational Technology.

Suprianti, G. A. P., Mahayanti, N. W. S., & Kusuma, I. P. I. (2018, October). The use of flashcards as teaching media at elementary schools: Students' and teachers' perception. In *4th International Conference on English across Culture* (pp. 378-391).

Wahyudin, A. Y. & Rido. A. (2020) Perceptuals learning styles preferences of international master's students in Malaysia. *BAHTERA : Jurnal pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 19(1), 95-103.