

Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills Through Mind Mapping Technique

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the important language skills that should be mastered by students in learning English as a foreign language. Students are considered proficient in foreign languages because of speaking fluency. Speaking also plays a crucial role since it is the key to communicating well in the global world. This research aims to measure the use of mind mapping techniques in teaching speaking recount text. The research involved 35 students of the first year students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Suryakencana University, who took a speaking for a general communication course. The researcher employs two theories, namely Human Constructivist Theory (HCT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), to support this research. The method of this research was classroom action research. The instrument consisted of speaking test, observation sheet, and interview. The data of this research was analyzed by using two data analysis methods namely quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data analysis was used to examining and interpreting data from mind mapping practice and speaking test. Meanwhile, qualitative data analysis was taken from observation and interview. The result of this action research shows the improvement of students' speaking skills, it can be seen from the number of students who passed the minimum score (KKM) in the midterm test was 22.87% increased to 37.14% in the first cycle, and 77.14% in the second cycle. And it was also found that the changes of students' speaking skills are influenced by five factors, namely, interesting teaching media, attractive classroom activities, enjoyable classroom management, attractive teaching approach, and appropriate strategy or technique.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a crucial skill for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, as it allows them to convey ideas, feelings, and messages effectively. Nusnan, Terrell, and Brown (2003) identify speaking as a productive oral skill, involving systematic verbal utterances that convey meaning. This process of communication is essential in allowing students to express language and learn to produce meaningful utterances. Brown (2004) describes speaking as involving several essential components: grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. For students to communicate successfully, they need to master each of these components (Bachtiar et al., 2024).

Many high schools and vocational schools apply a genre-based approach to teaching speaking, often through recount texts. According to Gerot and Wignel (1994), a recount text retells past events to inform and entertain readers. It includes a generic structure with orientation, where background information is introduced, events ordered chronologically, and a reorientation where the writer may offer a personal comment (Bennet, Carter, & Marino, 2013). Students must also learn specific language features of recount texts, such as using the simple past tense, time-linking words, and specific names (Bennet, Carter, & Marino, as cited in Erikana et al., 2018).

Human Constructivist Theory (HCT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) provide valuable insights into this process. HCT, introduced by Novak and Gowin, emphasizes active knowledge construction through meaningful experiences and encourages learners to integrate new information with existing knowledge. When students struggle with components of recount texts, such as grammar or vocabulary, HCT suggests that teachers should create engaging, relevant learning experiences that connect new material with students' prior knowledge, making the learning experience more meaningful and understandable (Azzahara et al., 2024; Irasuti & Bachtiar, 2024). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), developed by Kolb, focuses on learning through active involvement and reflection on experiences. In the context of recount texts, ELT supports the idea that students benefit from linking language learning to their own experiences, which allows them to understand and internalize the text structures and language features more effectively.

The need to develop speaking proficiency often encounters challenges, such as students' lack of linguistic awareness, difficulties in grammar, pronunciation issues, and limited control of content (Yulianti, Sudarsono, & Susilawati, 2018). Some students may feel hesitant to speak due to fear of making mistakes, particularly regarding pronunciation or grammar, which affects their confidence.

Budd (2004) and later researchers (Jbeili, 2013; Bystrova & Larionova, 2015; Zega, 2018) suggest mind mapping as a learning strategy that can help. Mind mapping allows students to structure and connect ideas visually, making the material more engaging and organized. Buzan (2005, as cited in Nasution, 2020) outlines steps for creating effective mind maps: starting with a central image, radiating main themes from it, and using colors, images, and keywords to illustrate each branch. This technique aligns with both HCT and ELT, as it encourages students to build knowledge actively (HCT) while also learning through a hands-on approach that emphasizes personal reflection and connection (ELT).

The researcher conducted a pre-research study with first-year students in an English Education Study Program. Results from a midterm speaking test showed that most students struggled in speaking activities, particularly recount texts. Of 35 students, 77.14% scored below the minimum passing grade (KKM). For individual components, only 17.14% passed in vocabulary, 40% in grammar, 25.71% in pronunciation, 22.85% in fluency, and 11.42% in comprehension. The main issues observed were insufficient vocabulary, grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation, often resulting from a traditional, lecture-focused teaching approach. In this approach, students were asked to rewrite texts, memorize, and recite them, leading to a lack of engagement and confidence.

Considering these challenges, the researcher sought to implement mind mapping to enhance students' understanding and ability to construct recount texts. By organizing ideas visually, students could better structure their thoughts, helping them in both speaking and comprehension. This approach aligns with HCT's principles, encouraging students to create meaningful connections in their learning. It also resonates with ELT, as it involves students actively engaging with the material and reflecting on their learning process. The objective of the study is to determine whether mind

mapping can improve students' speaking skills and to understand its overall impact on their engagement and learning outcomes

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Speaking

Speaking is a fundamental skill in language acquisition, as it enables learners to express ideas, emotions, and thoughts verbally. According to Brown (2004), speaking is a productive skill involving complex interactions between the speaker and listener. It requires mastering several essential elements: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, developing speaking skills is crucial to achieving communicative competence. Speaking is not only about producing sounds but also about conveying meaning effectively in varied social contexts (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Communicative success depends on students' ability to organize thoughts, adhere to language conventions, and engage listeners meaningfully (Harmer, 2007).

2.2 Teaching Speaking

Effective teaching of speaking requires strategies that focus on enabling students to communicate fluently and accurately. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that teaching speaking must address both the linguistic and psychological aspects, such as helping students gain confidence and reducing anxiety. Nunan (2003) suggests that speaking activities should encourage spontaneous, natural conversation, as this better prepares students for real-life communication. Teaching speaking in EFL contexts often incorporates activities like discussions, role-plays, and simulations that promote active language use (Chaerunnisa et al., 2024; Ismitasari et al., 2024).

2.3 Mind Mapping Technique

Mind mapping is a visual learning strategy that organizes information around a central concept, using branches for related subtopics (Buzan, 2005). This technique can support students' cognitive processing by making complex information easier to understand and recall. Budd (2004) defines mind mapping as a tool that helps students visualize the structure of information, making it more accessible and memorable. In the context of teaching recount texts, mind mapping allows students to break down events into smaller, manageable parts, improving their ability to organize and retell stories logically and cohesively (Bachtiar & Puspitasari, 2024).

2.4 Human Constructivist Theory (HCT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

Mind mapping aligns with both Human Constructivist Theory (HCT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). According to Novak (2010), HCT emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge based on prior experiences and new input, which mind mapping supports by helping students relate new language content to existing knowledge structures. Kolb's ELT (1984) suggests that learning is most effective when learners can actively engage and reflect on their experiences. Through mind mapping, students can engage with recounting texts by visually mapping their experiences and reflecting on the logical flow of events, thereby improving their comprehension and retention.

3. METHOD

This research was conducted at Suryakencana University which was located on Jl. Pasir Gede Raya, Bojongherang, sub district Cianjur, regency Cianjur, West Java 43216. The participants of this

research were 35 first-year students of the English Education Study Program who took Speaking for General Communication II, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Suryakencana University, with 7 males and 28 females. It was conducted from April to May 2024. The reason why the researcher chose that class as the participants, since most of them had low speaking ability, was proven by their scores, which were under 70 as the minimum score. The technique of this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). Kemmis and McTaggart as cited in (Habeab Al-Obaydi et al., 2021) assert that action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. Furthermore, Wallace (1998), as cited in (Nasution, 2020), classroom action research is research that is focused on facilitating the reflective cycle, which provides an effective technique for improving professional action.

The researcher utilized two cycle processes: cycles 1 and 2, with four meetings for each cycle with 90 minutes time allotment. Each cycle had four meetings with three meetings for the action and assignment and one meeting for the test.

The researcher used tests, observation, field notes, and interviews as the techniques for collecting the data. The researcher collaborated with an observer or collaborator since the researcher wanted to know the process that occurred during his research using mind mapping for Recount text. The researcher employed speaking tests in each cycle to gauge the students' proficiency in spoken English and their entire English performance. At the conclusion of each cycle, the teacher took the students' speaking score to determine how much the students' speaking abilities had improved. Next, observation sheets were used to gather data during the teaching and learning process (worksheets, activities, assessment). The researcher also collaborated with the other observer and made field notes as well.

After that, the students and the researcher had an interview. The students who had been questioned are chosen based on the criteria of high and low students. This was carried out to find out the information whether the technique used is effective in helping the students solve their problems.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the research was obtained from the implementation of mind mapping in teaching speaking class at the first-year students of English Education Study Program who took Speaking for General Communication II, faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Suryakencana university. The research was conducted in two cycles as shown in the entire cycles below.

a. First Cycle

As previously stated, mind mapping with a genre-based approach was implemented to solve the problems found in teaching speaking skills. The first cycle was carried out in four meetings. It was done once a week. In doing the research, the researcher was helped by the collaborator. The collaborator filled the observation sheet and field notes during the research. The researcher designed the activities during the research very well. The activities were orderly, showing the implementation of mind mapping in teaching speaking through recounting text.

The students were taught to learn to speak by looking at models and videos from the teacher. They learned how to pronounce the words in the given model. The researcher and the students discussed the model and tried to summarize the essence of what was being discussed. After the

students could grasp the discussed material, they had to create their own mind mapping for speaking English through retelling their recount text, related to the topic being discussed in their group.

Based on the performance test, it indicated that the average score increased compared to the result of speaking midterm test. The result of speaking test scores for vocabulary aspect was 66.05, for the grammar was 68.08, for the pronunciation was 67.05 for the fluency was 66.28 and for the comprehension was 65.88. Meanwhile, the score of the speaking aspects in the first cycle are as follows, for the vocabulary was 69.31, for the grammar was 71.05, for the pronunciation was 69.8, for the fluency was 71.54 and for the comprehension was 68.49.

By judging the data, from the result of the speaking test in cycle 1, the researcher and the collaborator analyzed that there were some improvements on students' speaking skill in retelling their recount texts. The improvement could be seen from each indicator available in speaking rubric. From the result of the speaking test in the first cycle stated that there were 13 students could pass the minimum score, meanwhile 22 students could not, it means that approximately 62.85% of students got failed in the speaking test.

From the first aspect, vocabulary, 10 students or 28.57%, the second, grammar, 18 students or 51.42%, the third, pronunciation, 11 students or 31.42%, and the fourth, fluency, 16 students or 45.71% of students could reach the minimum score. Moreover, for the last aspect, comprehension, showed that there were 9 students or 25.71% of students could achieve the minimum score. The achievement of students' speaking skills refers to the aspect illustrated in the following figure.

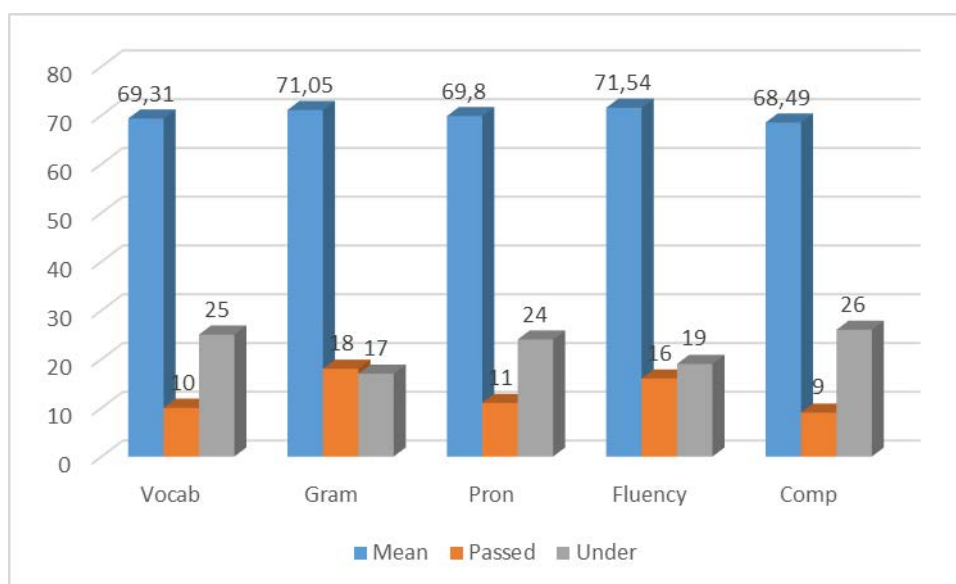


Figure 1. Students' Achievement of Speaking Test in Cycle 1

The figure above provides the information about the students' ability in passing the test which the score of each indicator was surprisingly satisfying compared to the result of the midterm test or students' speaking skills before conducting the research. As previously stated in the background that the data in the midterm test showed that 77.14% of students are below the minimum scores. However, it decreased to 37.14% after applying mind maps in retelling the story of their recount texts in cycle 1, yet, the next improvement was still needed.

The following is the mean score of each aspect of students' speaking skill assessment at the end of first cycle. For vocabulary was 69.31 with 10 students or 28.57%, for grammar was 71.05

with 18 students or 51.42%, for pronunciation was 69.8 with 11 students or 31.42%, for fluency was 71.54 with 16 students or 45.71%, and for comprehension was 68.49% with 9 students or 25.71% of students passed the minimum score.

Based on the observation, the researcher concluded that comprehension was regarded as the most difficult aspect for students due to the lack of vocabulary since in mastering foreign language, vocabulary is the most important component and the first thing students need to have. The researcher realized that it is necessary to do drill and practice for increasing vocabulary. Another aspect is pronunciation. In term of pronunciation, even though the students' accents were still influenced by their mother tongue, however many of them pronounced the words better and clearer than during the midterm test. Furthermore, they could avoid mispronunciation as they rechecked the correct pronunciation first and learned how to pronounce the words well.

The figure 1 also showed that each aspect of students 'speaking skill improved yet some of them still low ability. Almost all students made improvement on each aspect. In the meantime, some weaknesses were still found on vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension because only a few students who could pass the minimum score, most of them are below the minimum score.

Although most of students or 37.14% had made much improvement on their speaking skills compared with the previous meetings but it didn't give enough satisfaction since the students just did a little change on some speaking components, so the researcher thought that it was necessary for the researcher to continue to the next cycle.

b. Second Cycle

The second cycle was also conducted in four meetings which each meeting consisted of 90 minutes. In this cycle, the students were given other kinds of topics for recount text such as the most enjoyable moment in life, the most embarrassing moment in life, and having a holiday or vacation story. For the first thing that was used in teaching speaking of recount text were using PowerPoint and some videos related to the mentioned topics.

After explaining the theory of recount text and watching some videos, the researcher then asked the students to rewrite their past experience with the topics "the most enjoyable moment in life, the most embarrassing moment in life, and having a holiday or vacation story". The researcher expected that the revised plan would make the students' speaking skills could be better improved. The revised plan was focused on problems and weaknesses found in the previous cycle that needed to be solved in this cycle. The revised plan was made by the researcher based on the reflection made both by the researcher and the collaborator. The revised plan consists of: 1) Redesigning the lesson plan which involved activities and steps that should be done by the researcher and students in improving speaking through retelling the past experiences of recount text by using mind mapping technique, 2) understanding the points made in mind maps and do the drill and practice based on the created mind maps. The activities in the second cycle was quite similar with the first cycle, but there were some different emphasizing due to revised plan overcome the certain unsolved problems in the first cycle.

After the material had been explained and confirmed all students understood the given material. The researcher showed several topics related to the past experience story available in the video. To make the students easily understand the explanation given, the researcher explained it for several times and reviewed it again and again. It was done to solve the problems happened in the first cycle which showed the most difficult thing for students in grasping the material in the video is understanding the native speakers' utterances since they spoke very fast. That's why the researcher

did this to make them get used to it. Thereby, they could figure out any words that they heard from the video. Besides that, they had to keep concentrated when they heard a long utterances in the examples of story narration related to the topics which can help them create mind mapping to perform recount speaking activities through retelling their past experience better.

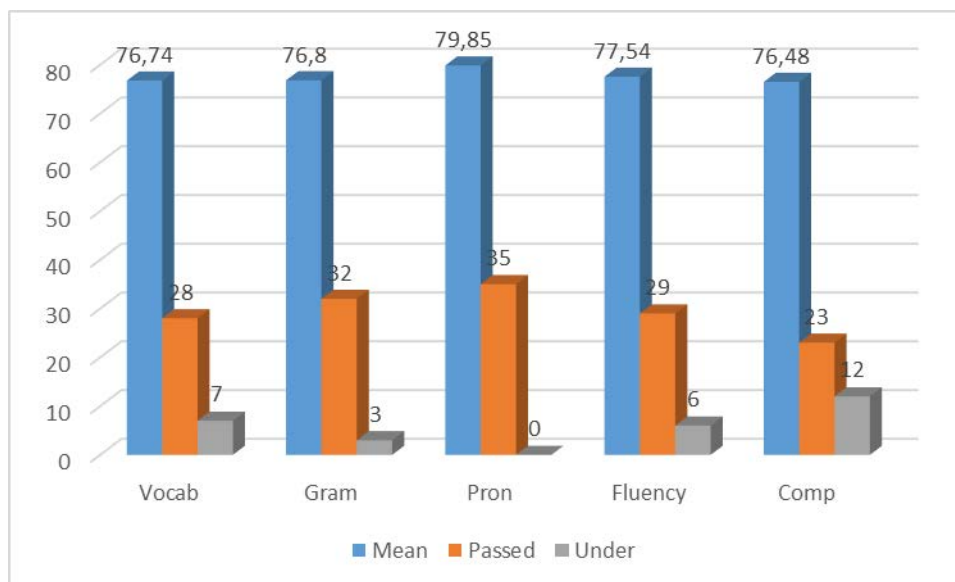


Figure 2. Students' Achievement of Speaking Test in Cycle 2

After conducting the stages in the second cycle, the researcher described the data as follows: The mean score of students' speaking test at the end of the second cycle was 77.48. There were 27 (77.14%) students could pass the minimum score, meanwhile 8 (22.85%) students from 35 students could not. The mean score of each indicator of students' speaking skills through speaking test at the end of the second cycle shown as follows. The mean score of vocabulary was 76.74. There were 28 students or 80% of students reached the minimum score. The mean score of the second indicator, grammar was 76.8. There were 32 students or 91.42% of students passed the minimum score. The mean score of the third indicator, pronunciation was 79.85 with 35 students or 100% of students could pass the minimum score. The mean score of the fourth indicator, fluency was 77.54 with 29 students or 82.85% of students reached the minimum score. And finally the mean score of the last indicator, comprehension was 76.48 with 23 students or 65.71% of students reached the minimum score.

From cycle 1 to cycle 2, there was more improvement on students' speaking skills gained by the students by using mind mapping in retelling their past experiences with certain topics in recount text. Clearly, the researcher found that the students' speaking skills was better improved. The achievement of students' speaking skills referring to the indicators is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 2 above certainly depicted that the students' ability in passing the test based on several indicators was surprisingly satisfying starting from the speaking midterm test to cycle 1. Meanwhile, the data gained in cycle 2 proved that there was much improvement on students' speaking skills through retelling the past experience stories of recount text compared to the test result in cycle 1.

Mind mapping is used by teachers as a benchmark for assessment in the learning process in line with some researchers conducted. First, (Nurrizal, M., Rimayani, 2016). Based on the result, it

showed that the use of mind mapping strategy is effective to improve students' speaking ability. According to the questionnaire result, the writer concluded that almost all of the students showed positive response toward the use of mind mapping. They like studying English speaking by using mind mapping strategy. So, they got a lot of benefit and experience, it could increase their creativity, imagination, and focus, to remember the vocabularies better and learn English more fun. In other words, the students responded positively in learning English speaking by using mind mapping strategy. Next, (Nasution, 2020) The result shows that mind mapping improves students' speaking skills better, it can be seen from the students' means score which gradually improved from the first to the second cycle. The researcher also found that the changes of students' speaking skills are influenced by six factors namely interesting teaching media, interesting material, attractive classroom activities, enjoyable classroom management, attractive teacher's approach, and teacher strategy.

Furthermore, (Bsharat, TRK., Dweikat, 2023) the study result shows that the mapping concept positively and significantly influences EFL learners' English speaking performance. In addition to enhancing speaking skills, mind mapping contributed to the building of self-esteem in speaking English, strengthening cooperation among students, increasing speaking skills, gaining a deeper understanding of speaking skills, increasing engagement, and developing creativity. Additionally, mapping strategy enriches brainstorming of situations to practice English speaking, as well as organizing these situations thematically.

Based on the researches conducted by the researchers above who have the similarity as this research assert that mind mapping can improve learning outcomes including speaking skills. It is in line with what stated by Tony Buzan, that mind mapping is an extremely effective technique.

4. CONCLUSION

The result of this action research shows the improvement of students' speaking skills through recount text story telling by using mind mapping technique. The improvement of student's speaking skill through mind mapping can be seen from the number of students who passed the minimum score in the midterm test, from 22.87% increased to 37.14% in the first cycle, and 77.14% in the second cycle. In the meantime, there was also much improvement on each indicator of the second cycle which was 76.74 for vocabulary, 76.8 for grammar, 79.85 for pronunciation, 77.54 for fluency, and 76.48 for comprehension. So, the student's speaking skill through recount text story telling by using mind mapping could be better improved. The effects of the teaching and learning process could be indicated by; the activeness of students in following the lesson, students 'confidence in giving the opinions that they used to feel ashamed to do it before, the class conduciveness with less noise, so they could focus more on the lesson and actively engaged in the teaching and learning process.

From the statement above, it can be concluded that teaching speaking skill through recount text story telling by using mind mapping technique proven to give more improvement on students' speaking skills as well as give good effect in the teaching-learning process.

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