

## A Conversation Diary: A Teaching and Learning Speaking Media

Neti Rosiana Fadilah

Asmi Citra Nusantara, Indonesia

[neti88.english@gmail.com](mailto:neti88.english@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This research aims to analyze the use of conversation diary as a teaching and learning speaking media at ASMI Citra Nusantara Banjarmasin. This research is done in Classroom Action Research (CAR) within 3 cycles. Each of the cycle is started by assessing classroom problems, and continues with planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Each cycle has 5 hours with 17 student as participant. In the first cycle, there's less than 50% student passing at passing grade, according to many students who are weak in mastering grammar and vocabulary and not confident in speaking. But the result more better in the next cycle, because students began to enjoy the activities of convertible diary even though there were still passive students. In conclusion, this study proved that Conversation Diary could improve the students' speaking skill better and help decreasing the students' anxiety. With enough length of time, it would gain better result.*

**Keyword:** *conversation diary, student, speaking, teacher, writing.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In learning English, students are not only required to be able to write, read, speak and even be able to have discussions in English. Zuhriyah (2017; 119) said that speaking is very essential, moreover speaking English because people can express their ideas and communicate what they want orally. If Tahir (2015: 174) says when he or she has the ability to speak English means he or she is considered successful in learning a foreign language. Then Aye and Phyu (2015: 1) argues that we need an effective English speaking skill in the whole life aspects in this globalization era, strengthen opinions Sepahvand (2014: 1847) that there are some reasons to put speaking as the first aim of study such as personal satisfaction from being able to speak and reaching other interests or career goals.

English is considered important, considering that most of these languages are used for conversation and communication globally in various parts of the world. Not to mention the added condition of the Asian Economic Community which forces job seekers or candidates that have good English skills, oral and written. Language is very important to be able to communicate well in order to achieve a purpose or goal. Harmer (2001) mentions, the reasons when two people are engaged in talking are they have some communicative purposes, they select the communication from their language store, they want to listen to something, and they are interested in the communicative purposes of what is being said. These generalizations are the majority of communicative events and these will have particular relevance for learning and teaching of language.

ASMI Citra Nusantara is a vocational tertiary institution that has a special way to make students active in learning English through a conversation diary program. Conversation diaries are used to hone the ability of students to write certain topics and communicate them to English tutors with active discussion methods, with the aim that ASMI students in Nusantara's image have more ability in mastering English than other college students. The use of diary in helping the students to prepare to communicate orally also discussed by Nakatani In a study with title *The Effects of Awareness-Raising Training on Oral Communication Strategy Use*. Nakatani (2005) also mention that Oral Communication Strategy (OCS) is a strategy that focus on the process of speaking behavior between the speaker and the person who are they speaking to.

According to Akbar (2014: 92) argues that encouraging the students to read a certain text can solve the problem of the hesitation and the weakness of speaking. Additionally, Melendez, Zavala, and Mendez (2014: 549) say that speaking is the main challenge for the beginners and often makes them frustration so that the speaking strategies for the beginners are needed very much. Current conditions students have low ability to master English, especially in terms of speaking Agree with Dewi's opinion (2016: 342), the causes of the students' low speaking skills are as follows: (1) not having enough time in practicing speaking, (2) not having enough vocabulary, (3) not having interest in speaking because of uninteresting teaching methods, and (4) not being able to relate the speaking content to their real life. So, with this program the

researcher is trying to find out how effective the use of conversation diaries to improve students' speaking skills begins with writing activities in a conversation diary booklet.

## **2. Methodology**

This study belongs to experimental research. It concerns studying the effect of specified and controlled treatments given to the subjects belonging to different groups. Populations of this study are students of management business at Akademi Sekretari dan Manajemen Indonesia (ASMI) Citra Nusantara di Banjarmasin. The sampling technique used is random cluster sampling, where the researchers chose 1 class from 4 business management classes in the second semester at ASMI Citra Nusantara in Banjarmasin academic Year 2019-2020.

Data were collected by direct observation techniques through interviews and also saw the development of the results of the speaking tests of students who became a sample of 17 students at each end of the cycle. In each cycle there are consisting of three cycles, namely cycle I, cycle II and cycle III which contained four stages, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection of each cycle (Latief, 2012).

The planning stage contains exposure to strategy preparation, learning and standards of success. Where at this stage, students are given a meeting that discusses the activities to be carried out, including given a conversation diary booklet where they are free to write according to the topic given. They are allowed to follow relevant information from any media such as the internet, magazines, newspapers, or direct informant information. But copy and paste is not permitted, or to copy the writing of his friend.

In the action phase, what is needed is an implementation of the planning, which The Conversation Diary collected to the researcher to get the writing score and review. Then students are asked to talk about the topics they have written. At this stage the researcher assessed the students' speaking ability based on the scoring rubric speaking aspect of Maulany (2013), namely:

| Criteria | Comprehension   | Vocabulary                               | Grammar  | Fluency  | Pronunciation  |
|----------|---|--|--|--|--|
| 5        | Appears to understand everything without difficulty     | Speaks in L2 with accurate English words | Produces complete and accurate sentences                               | Speaks in L2 very fluently and effortlessly    | Speaks in L2 intelligibly and has few traces of foreign accent |
| 4        | Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although | Speaks mostly in L2 with few L1 words    | Produce some phrases instead of complete sentences with consistent and | Speaks in L2 less fluently due to few problems | Speaks mostly in L2 intelligibly with mother                   |

|   |  |  |   |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
|   | occasional repetition may be necessary   |  | accurate word order or produces consistent omitted sentence | of vocabulary / selection of words  | tongue accent   |
| 3 | Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with many repetitions         | Produce 4-6 English words  | Produces inconsistent and incorrect sentences/phrases       | Speaks mostly in L2 with some pauses and hesitancy                                    | Speaks mostly in L1, but produces 1-3 English words and pronounce them in intelligible mother tongue accent                         |
| 2 | Has great difficulty understanding what is said, often misunderstands the Qs               | Produce 1-3 English words (brands or place names such as KFC, Starbucks, etc. do not count as English word vocabulary) due to very limit | Answer mostly in L1, with 1-3 English words/phrases         | Speaks mostly in L1, tires to speak in L2 but so halting with so many pauses and "er" | Speaks mostly in L1, but produces 1-3 English words. Needed words, need some repetition in pronouncing the words to understand them |
| 1 | Unable to comprehend the material so that unable to express/respond the question correctly | Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation in L2 virtually impossible   | Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time         | Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time                                   | Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | so that the students speaks in L1 all the time |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

The third was observing. Observing was the process of collecting data indicating the success of the strategy in solving the classroom problem (Latief, 2012). In the observation phase, researchers will give interviews related to topics written by students and observe changes in students' speaking abilities before and after writing a conversation diary. At this stage the researcher has two test scores namely writing and speaking.

The fourth was reflecting. Reflecting was the process of analyzing data to determine how far the data collected have shown the success of the strategy in solving the problem (Latief, 2012). In this stage, the researcher analyzed the data to determine. When cycle 1 is done, the researcher continues to step of cycle 2 and 3. Hopefully the students could improve the test result in next cycle.

The first cycle was carried out on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for the planning stage. At this stage the researcher who is also the teacher gives direction on the conversation diary activities including how students can write well. Then students are given time to memorize what they wrote and present it at the next meeting. And the topic in this first cycle is "my favorite figure". the next meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for the action and observation phase. At this stage it is known that the speaking scores obtained by the students are still low. Based on the observation, the researcher get analyzed that Students experience difficulties in comprehending English as a whole and more interesting to learn another foreign language like Korean Language. This might be considered reasonable, considering that students still consider English as a companion language and study it only for credit and examination (Tsuda, 2003).

The second cycle was happen at 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020. In this meeting, the researcher had an interview to all participant to review the result and provide suggestions for improvement in the next conversation activity including giving new topic for next writing task namely My Type of Boyfriend/Girlfriend. Same with the pattern in the first cycle, students will present their writings at the next meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020. In the action phase, researchers found that there was an increase in students' speaking skills, one of which was that many of them had started fluently and chose topics with simpler grammar and vocabulary. The results of the second cycle speaking scores were also considered quite good, although not very high improvement. The improvement in speaking skills is still quite low in the vocabulary aspect where only 35.29% of successful students, and the highest aspect is comprehension where 70% student made it.

The last cycle occurred on February 24, 2020 where this cycle was the development of scenarios derived from the revision and development of scenarios in cycles 1 and 2. At this meeting the researchers asked students to recount text. Where

they still write but the topic is not specifically determined, but they are asked to tell their lives or experiences in the past.

### 3. DISCUSSION

| Speaking Aspect | Cycle 1 |   |   |   |   | Student Passing the passing Grades | Cycle 1 |   |   |   |   | Student Passing the passing Grades | Cycle 1 |   |   |   |   | Student Passing the passing Grades |
|-----------------|---------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
|                 | 1       | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                    | 1       | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                    | 1       | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                                    |
| Comprehension   | 2       | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 35.3%                              | 0       | 2 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 70.59%                             | 0       | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 76.47%                             |
| Fluency         | 5       | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 11.8%                              | 0       | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 58.82%                             | 0       | 2 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 70.59%                             |
| Vocabulary      | 4       | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 23.5%                              | 1       | 6 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 35.29%                             | 1       | 1 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 64.71%                             |
| Grammar         | 3       | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 29.4%                              | 2       | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 52.94%                             | 2       | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 64.71%                             |
| Pronunciation   | 2       | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 17.6%                              | 1       | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 58.82%                             | 1       | 2 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 70.59%                             |

#### Cycle I

The findings in the first cycle have provided an overview of the problems they face from various aspects. In this first cycle all aspects are still below the 50% standard for all aspects. The highest aspect is comprehension with the achievement of 35% of students who can pass passing grades. They have problems with self-confidence, anxiety and difficulty using the right grammar to write.

The lowest rate is seen in fluency with a success rate of 11.8%. Based on the results of observation interviews the average student has anxiety about what they will convey. They are very insecure, and consider their abilities to be very minimal. So that during the speaking process, students often repeat the sentence in understanding the question and still speak English with a mother tongue accent. Therefore stimuli or warm-up questions regarding their preparation in writing stories and reading them in front of what researchers have done are urgently needed. Agree with Kayi (2006) stated that discussions, role play, simulation, brainstorming, and storytelling are the techniques for teaching speaking. With the results obtained from cycle 1, the action in cycle 2 will be carried out in accordance with the problems in cycle 1. The topic given is still descriptive in nature.

#### Cycle II

The findings in the second cycle were slightly increased in all aspects. Especially in the aspect of comprehension which in cycle I was only 35% to 71%, based on the results of interviews with students it was found that this aspect increased due to the emphasis at the first meeting in this cycle coupled with discussions with researchers about what strategies could be applied to facilitate understanding of assignments and topics given. The aspect of fluency has increased from 12% to 59% and pronunciation increased to 59% from 18%, this is considered quite good which indicates that students have begun to believe in their abilities. Similarly, mastery of grammar and vocabulary, although after this phase is still a special note for students to improve it. Their vocabulary is a bit more and more expressive in the story, seen in the addition of 2 students who score 4 in pronunciation. When answering questions

from researchers, and invited to discuss sentences in English began to begin to use a little more than stage I.

Discussion is a very influential thing in improving students' English speaking ability. Because as students they have extensive knowledge and discussions really help them develop it. As Heo (2003) states that stories allow individuals to experience the world well beyond their own lives. Likewise McDrury and Alterio (2003) promotes the experiential aspects of storytelling and contend that storytelling is especially beneficial teaching strategies for young professionals for this reason.

#### Cycle III

The findings in this last cycle were not so far from the results in the second cycle even though in this cycle the acquisition of passing grade students increased. Like comprehension aspect increased from 71% to 76.47%, fluency aspect is the same as pronunciation aspect to 71%, and vocabulary and grammar aspects have the same value, 65%. This increase was observed as the success of the conversation diary program in improving students' speaking abilities. Factor discussion at each initial meeting of each cycle is also the key to effective communication in finding the right strategy to improve ability based on the results of the evaluation of previous tests.

Students also look more enthusiastic, they know their mistakes in every speaking aspect because researchers provide graffiti in the form of suggestions, improve writing in each of their sentences with the discussion method. Heaton (1975: 12) states, "one of the skills that is important in daily life is speaking abilities since the area of language is firstly presented orally before reading and writing are practiced. In this case in line with the conversation diary this is one of the media for telling stories and then writing in a book, which can be read at any time in order to find out the shortcomings of writing the story grammar.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The use of conversation diaries for students in this study was considered quite effective even though the value did not reach 80% with an average success rate of 60%. This is assessed due to the observation period and observation within a period of 1 month. The usage of the conversation diary was effective to review and evaluate the student not only for speaking skills but also for writing and reading skills. The frequency of time being something important. This study only going 1 month with 3 cycles, and using 3 topics for discussion. A two-day pause given by researchers to students preparing writing material and preparing presentations. With the duration of preparation time given it turns out to be able to help students have time to prepare material from various sources. Reversal the previous subject, and guide them to the next subject (Nakatani, 2005).

Alonso (2011) argued that learning diaries could improve the students' English communication no matter what the students' English level proficiency. This study proved that students need more practice to speak English more frequently but they can't do this without a media like a diary. Conversation Diary provides some activities that help students' preparation to achieve the target language for writing.

They can use any media to gain more vocabularies, dictions, and information. They can write anything without any boundaries.

Nowadays the use of international languages, especially English, dominates all aspects of communication between nations and countries. English is agreed by International as the official language that is used universally in the world of technology, economics, politics, culture and other fields. Likewise in Indonesia, English becomes a mandatory language to be learned after Indonesian. The success of a person learning English is seen from the skills and fluency he speaks so that the occurrence of feedback from the communication and achieving desired goals.

The second semester Business Management Program at ASMI Citra Nusantara in Banjarmasin prepares students to be able to pursue careers in the field of International trade, be able to correspond with Indonesia and English especially at export and import system. Therefore, English learning media plays a very important role in motivating students to be able to speak English correctly.

The use of the Conversation Diary media to improve speaking English is very helpful. It helps students to improve their mindset, creativity in making stories, then how to write well and correctly and which they then convey through storytelling and discussion. The theme and type of text that they write and tell in accordance with the needs of students is to ask students to be clever and creative in describing something.

After the researchers conducted a study with 3 cycles and each cycle contained planning, action, observation and reflection. The Conversation diary found that they helped improve their confidence in speaking English, understanding in understanding questions, and motivating them in correct pronunciation, motivating them in looking for a new phrase or vocabulary of new and broader English sentences in that means the conversation diary book gives them a positive influence on their speaking ability. They are more enthusiastic, they know their mistakes in every speaking aspect because researchers provide graffiti in the form of suggestions, improve writing in each of their sentences with the method of discussion

## **REFERENCES**

- Akbar, F. (2014). The role of reading in improving speaking skill in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. *International Journal of English Language & Translation studies*, 2(4), 92-98.
- Alonso, A. C. (2011). Learning diaries to Foster learner autonomy in mixed-ability groups. *Tejuelo: Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura*. Educación(11), 47-63.
- Aye, K. K. & Phyu, K. L. (2015). Developing students' speaking skill through short stories. *Yanong University of Education Research Journal*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Dewi, H. (2016). Project based learning techniques to improve speaking skills. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 7(3), 341-359.
- Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 3rd Ed, New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2001.



- Heaton J. B, 1975, Writing English Language Tests, London: Longman Group Limited.
- 
- Kayi, H. 2006. Teaching Speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language. The Internet TESL Journal, vol.XII, no II, November 2006.
- Latief, M. A. (2012). Research methods on language learning: An introduction. Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang Press.
- Maulany,D. B. (2013). The use of project-based learning in improving the students speaking skill (A classroom action research at one of primary schools in Bandung). Journal of English and Education, 1(1), 30-42.
- McDrury, Janice & Alterio, Maxine. (2003). Learning Through Storytelling in Higher Education: Using reflection and experience to improve learning. USA: Kogan Page.inc
- Melendez, R.A. M., Zavala, G.G.Q., & Mendez, R.F. (2014). Teaching speaking strategies to beginners. European Scientific Journal, special edition vol. 1, 548554.
- Nakatani, Y. (2005). The Effects of Awareness-Raising Training on Oral Communication Strategy Use. The modern language journal, 89.
- Sepahvand, H. (2014). The effect of oral reproduction of short stories on speaking skill in Iranian high school students (case study: khorram abad, Iran). International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), 3(7), 1847-1851.
- Tahir, S. Z. A. (2015). Improving Students' Speaking Skill through Yahoo Messenger at University of Iqra Buru. International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 3(3): 174-181. doi: 10.11648/j.ijll.20150303.20
- Tsuda, S. (2003). Attitudes toward English language learning in higher education in Japan (2): Raising awareness of the notion of global English. Intercultural Communication Studies, 12(3), 61-75.
- Zuhriyah, Mukminatus (2017). Storytelling to Improve Students' Speaking Skill. English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris. Vol 10 (1), 2017, 119-134. Jombang.
-