IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH FLASHCARD MEDIA ON THE TOPIC DIALOGUE ABOUT HOBBIES IN CLASS VIII N

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ABSTRACT

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was designed to improve the English speaking skills of eighth-grade students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School by utilizing flashcards that emphasize dialogues about hobbies. The background is that students' speaking skills are still low, reflected in the average pre-test score of 74.5 (rounded to 75.0), which is triggered by the lack of interactive exercises and limited vocabulary mastery. This research was conducted in two cycles during the 2023/2024 academic year, using qualitative and quantitative methods with the steps of planning, implementing actions, observation, and reflection. The flashcards used were made with pictures and simple dialogues, such as "What is your hobby? I like cooking." Data were collected through speaking tests, observation sheets, and questionnaires to obtain feedback from students. The results showed significant progress, with post-test scores increasing to 82.2 (rounded to 83.0) in Cycle I and 90.0 (rounded to 90.2) in Cycle II. In addition, student participation and their self-confidence also developed positively. Challenges such as shyness and lack of self-confidence can be overcome through group discussions. These findings confirm that flashcards are effective in supporting interactive English learning, in line with a communicative approach. This research contributes to the development of creative teaching strategies and suggests the increased use of visual media in classroom learning activities .

Keywords: *Classroom Action Research, Flashcard Media, English Speaking Ability, Hobby Dialogue, Participation, Self-Confidence.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the most visible skill when someone uses English in real-life situations. For junior high school students, speaking is not only a means of conveying information but also a means of building self-confidence, courage, and the ability to communicate with others. However, in practice, this skill often presents a significant challenge. This situation is also experienced by eighth-grade students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School.

The results of observations and initial pre-tests showed that students' speaking skills were in the "adequate" category, with an average score of 75 out of 100. When asked to speak, many students appeared hesitant and often stopped mid-sentence due to difficulty finding the right vocabulary or suddenly losing their ideas. Embarrassment and fear of making mistakes also became major obstacles, so they were less confident in actively participating in speaking activities in class.

This problem is inextricably linked to the current learning model. Teachers still act as the primary source of information, while students tend to be passive listeners. This learning model provides students with limited opportunities to practice, thus hindering their optimal development of speaking skills. Furthermore, the learning media used are not engaging or interactive enough to encourage active student engagement.

In such situations, media and methods are needed that can create a more lively, engaging, and interactive learning environment. One potential medium is flashcards. Flashcards offer a simple yet effective visual display: small images that spark ideas and open up space for student dialogue. With easily recognizable visuals, students can start conversations without having to search for vocabulary from scratch.

The topic of hobbies was chosen because it's so relevant to students' lives. When

talking about things they enjoy, students tend to be more enthusiastic, expressive, and natural. Visual support from flashcards helps them initiate conversations more easily, for example, using images of football , cooking , or drawings, which can immediately spark ideas and spontaneous dialogue.

Previous research also supports the effectiveness of visual media in improving speaking skills. Fitria (2023) demonstrated that flashcards can increase motivation and facilitate student vocabulary recall. Umar (2021) found that visual media can reduce student anxiety, making them more confident in speaking. Meanwhile, Abrora (2024) emphasized that simple, repetitive pair dialogue exercises can improve fluency and gradually build student confidence.

From a theoretical perspective, the use of flashcards aligns with the constructivist approach, which views learning as a process of constructing knowledge through direct experience. When students see images and associate them with specific vocabulary, they are actively constructing new understandings. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory also emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication, while flashcards provide a supportive context for such interactions. Furthermore, Paivio's Dual Coding theory explains that presenting information visually and verbally simultaneously can enhance students' comprehension and retention.

Unfortunately, at Nurul Jadid Junior High School, flashcards have not yet become a primary medium for speaking lessons, even though they are easy to implement and highly flexible for various classroom activities. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by implementing flashcards in a structured manner in a hobby-themed dialogue activity using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method.

Through the planning, action, observation, and reflection stages implemented in two cycles, this research not only focused on improving students' speaking skills but also on creating a fun, interactive, and motivating learning experience. It is hoped that the results of this study can serve as a reference for teachers and schools in using more creative learning media to provide more space for students to speak and build confidence in communicating in English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach that focuses on improving classroom learning practices through continuous action and reflection. This CAT model refers to the cycle developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four main stages, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The research combined qualitative and quantitative methods . Quantitative data was used to assess improvements in speaking ability through test scores (pre-test, post-test cycle I, and post-test cycle II). Meanwhile, qualitative data was obtained through observations of student activities, field notes, and brief interviews to determine changes in student attitudes, confidence, engagement, and responses to the use of flashcards.

The research location was Nurul Jadid Junior High School , with 10 groups (±30 students) of grade VIII as the research subjects. The learning material focused on hobbies - themed dialogues using illustrated flashcards as a tool for composing dialogues and speaking stimuli.

Implementation of Class Action

A. Cycle I
1. Planning
At this stage, the researcher prepares all learning requirements, including:
    a. Preparation of lesson plans and learning scenarios.

        Lesson plans are prepared for one 2 x 40-minute meeting, covering introductory, core, and closing activities. Learning scenarios are created to ensure a systematic and directed learning process.

    b. Making flashcard media

        Flashcards measuring 10×15 cm contain:
- Pictures of hobby activities such as cooking, playing football, dancing, gardening, reading, and swimming .
- Keywords supporting the dialogue such as "I like…", "My hobby is…", "I usually…", "I enjoy…" .

        Flashcards are made colorful to attract students' attention.

    c. Preparation of research instruments

        The instruments used in Cycle I include:
- Student activity observation sheet (speaking, courage, enthusiasm, response to media, cooperation, and difficulties).
- The assessment rubric for speaking includes the following aspects: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence .
- A short interview guide about students' experiences during learning.

    d. Pre-test Implementation

        Before the action, a pre-test was conducted in the form of introducing oneself and stating hobbies using simple sentences. The results showed an average score of 75 , with several key findings:
- Pronunciation is not clear
- Very short sentences
- Limited vocabulary
- Students seem nervous and shy to speak

        These findings form the basis for action in Cycle I.

2. Implementation of Actions (Acting)
    a. Preliminary Activities

        The teacher conducts apperception by asking about students' hobbies and introducing flashcard media.

    b. Core Activities
- Modeling

    The teacher models the dialogue using flashcards, for example:

    "What is your hobby?" – "My hobby is cooking. I usually cook with my mother."
- Pair Practice

    Students work in pairs. Each pair receives 4–6 flashcards to construct a dialogue.
- Guided Speaking

    Teachers help students who have difficulty with vocabulary or pronunciation.
- Mini Performance

        Each pair performs a dialogue in front of the class, then the teacher provides direct feedback.

    c. Closing

The teacher conducts a brief reflection by asking students to share their experiences using flashcards.

3. Observation

The results of the observations show:

- Some students began to dare to speak, although still in a low voice.
- Flashcards really help students to organize dialogue ideas.
- Some students are still reading the text and are not yet fluent.
- Some couples are very enthusiastic and can develop longer dialogues.
- There are still students who look nervous when performing.

Student participation increased from 45% (pre-cycle) to 68% in Cycle I.

4. Reflection

Based on the results of observations and post-tests in Cycle I, it was concluded that:

- Flashcards effectively stimulate vocabulary.
- Students still need more comfortable practice spaces, such as small groups.
- Pronunciation and fluency practice needs to be improved.

The average post-test score for Cycle I was 83.0 , an increase from 75.

The teacher plans improvements for Cycle II through:

- Small group exercises
- Additional flashcard variations
- More creative dialogue practice
- Increase the intensity of pronunciation practice

B. Cycle II

1. Cycle II Planning

Improvements made based on Cycle I reflection include:

- Increasing the number and variety of images on flashcards
- Practice longer and more creative dialogue
- The working model is changed to small groups (4–5 students)
- repeated pronunciation practice
- Give students the opportunity to create dialogues without examples from the teacher

2. Implementation of Cycle II Actions
   a. Preliminary Activities

   The teacher motivates students by showing new flashcards and explaining that they will make more creative dialogues.
   b. Core Activities
   • Group Discussion

   Each group gets 8–12 flashcards to determine the flow of the dialogue.
   • Creative Speaking Task

   Students create original dialogues without the teacher's pattern and add additional expressions such as:

   "I usually spend my weekend by..."

   "I started this hobby when I was..."

   "My friend also likes..."
   • Group Performance:

   Groups present their dialogues in front of the class. Assessment includes fluency, idea development, improvisation, intonation, and facial expression.
   • Feedback Session

   Teachers provide positive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

3. Cycle II Observation

Observation results show significant improvements:
- Students are more confident because they perform in groups.
- Fluency in speaking has improved rapidly.
- Vocabulary increases and sentences become more varied.
- Class participation reached 90% .
- The classroom atmosphere is much more active and communicative.
- Students' anxiety levels decreased drastically.

4. Cycle II Reflection

Cycle II shows the success of the action:
- The post-test average increased to 90.2 , up from 83.0 in Cycle I.
- Changes in learning attitudes were clearly visible: more confident, enthusiastic, and accustomed to speaking.

Because the target was achieved, the research was stopped in Cycle II.

Student Grade Recapitulation

Group	Pre-test	Post-test I	Post-test II	Total Increase
1	70	78	85	+15
2	75	82	91	+16
3	80	85	92	+12
4	72	83	90	+18
5	78	84	93	+15
6	74	81	89	+15
7	76	83	91	+15
8	69	79	87	+18
9	77	85	92	+15
10	74	82	90	+16

Average increase:
- Pre-test → Post-test I : +8.0
- Post-test I → Post-test II : +7.2
- Total overall increase: +15.2

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Pre-Test Results

Before the action was carried out, the researcher administered a pre-test to determine the students' initial English speaking ability on the topic of Hobbies .

The pre-test results showed that the students' abilities were still in the sufficient category. The average score reached 75.0 , with the highest score being 80 and the lowest score being

69.

The students' main difficulties were seen in:

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary mastery
- Fluency

2. Results of Post-Test Cycle I

After using flashcards in Cycle I, students' abilities showed improvement. The average post-test score was 83.0 .

Positive changes seen include:

- Students are more confident in trying to speak
- Vocabulary starts to increase
- Fluency in speech begins to develop

However, some students still experience difficulties in pronunciation and constructing longer sentences.

3. Results of Post-Test Cycle II

In cycle II, learning strategies were improved through:

- Addition of dialogue exercises
- Pronunciation practice
- Small group discussion

The results of the second cycle post-test showed a much more significant improvement with an average score of 90.2 .

Students were able to:

- Developing longer sentences
- Speak more fluently
- Use flashcards as a starting aid, but don't rely on them completely

4. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Values

Research Results Table

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test I	Post-Test II
1	70	78	85
2	75	82	91
3	80	85	92
4	72	83	90
5	78	84	93
6	74	81	89
7	76	83	91
8	69	79	87
9	77	85	92
10	74	82	90

The total increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test of cycle II reached 15.2 points , indicating that the use of flashcard media was very effective.

Discussion

The results of the research during two cycles showed that the use of flashcard media had a significant impact on improving the speaking skills of eighth grade students. In the pre-test stage, students still experienced various difficulties, such as inaccurate pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and low self-confidence. This is normal because they rarely had the opportunity to practice speaking actively before. Improvements began to be seen in cycle I. The use of flashcards helped students recognize new vocabulary through images so that they were easier to remember and use in dialogue. Students also began to dare to try speaking even though they still used simple sentences. This was reflected in the increase in the average score from 75.0 to 83.0.

Greater changes were seen in cycle II after the learning strategy was refined by adding intensive dialogue and pronunciation exercises. Students became more fluent, confident, and able to develop more complete sentences. The average score increased to 90.2, indicating that the research objectives were successfully achieved.

These findings align with research by Fitria (2023) and Umar (2021), which found that visual media such as flashcards can increase student motivation and comprehension by providing concrete stimuli for their memory. Furthermore, research by Abrora (2024) also confirmed that practical activities such as pair dialogues can improve students' fluency and confidence. Rifiyanti (2024) found a similar finding, showing that social interaction-based learning strategies can increase student participation and speaking confidence.

The findings of this study support constructivism theory, which emphasizes that students construct understanding through direct experience. Flashcards provide visual and practical experiences that engage students more actively in the learning process. Overall, the improvements were not only evident in their grades but also in their learning attitudes, which led to greater enthusiasm, engagement, and confidence in speaking English.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion From the results of this study, using flashcards is very effective in helping eighth-grade students of Nurul Jadid Middle School improve their English speaking skills, especially through dialogues about hobbies. With an increase in scores from 75.0 in the pre-test to 90.2 in the post-test cycle II, and changes in student attitudes to be more confident and active, this study proves that a visual and interactive approach like this can be a solution to speaking problems often faced in schools. This also aligns with previous theories and research, so teachers can start applying flashcards more to make English learning more interesting and effective.

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