Enhancing the EFI learners' speaking skill through folktales based instruction

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Abstract. This present research was conducted to improve the EFL learners' speaking skill through the implementation of Folktales Based Instruction. Consequently this study was intended to explore the valuable usefulness of folktales based instruction implemented intensively in EFL classroom. The subject of the present study consisted of 30 EFL adult learners. The study was conducted in two consecutive cycles in which two learning sessions were carried out for each cycle. The teaching sessions were strongly focused on the learners' active engagement in various communicative classroom activities to ensure that the learners gain higher level of speaking ability. The research result showed that the learners' speaking skill improved significantly in the second cycle compared to the first cycle. The questionnaire result also showed that the learners strongly enjoyed learning speaking through the integration of folktales based instruction.Therefore it is recommended that teachers should consider utilizing folktales based instruction in teaching speaking skill.
Key words: EFL Learners, Speaking, skill, Folktales, Instruction

1 Introduction

Globalization requires students to overstep the boundaries in communication by utilizing various forms of comunication [2], [24, 33]. Having the ability to communicative productively is essentially important for the students [14], [16,28] to be able to convey their ideas, thought, opniion and other matters that they have in their mind [24], [2,4]. Therefore, the students'communication skill should be continually developed by enggaging the students in more contextual speaking activities. The speaking activities should be designed in order to bridge the students to develop their communication skill in line with the context and the purpose of communication [26], [2, 18].

Many researchers have made a great deal of efforts to find out the magic strategies to improve the students' speaking skill, for examples studies conducted by [19], [10, 16, 29], which had contributed several ways of teaching speaking. However, it seems too difficult to get the best strategy for every learning situation, therefore the search for the best way of teaching is continually carried out by the language education researchers. This is done because the students' speaking skill is very important to be improved in order that they can communicate effectively [14, 17]. The necessity of improving speaking skill also

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suggested by [28], that having speaking skill is a success key to effective classroom communication.

Looking at the challenges above, an appropriate strategy need to be applied to involve the learners in the speaking learning activities, it is very important to exercise a study to find out more effective way of teaching speaking. In this study, the researcher proposed the use of folktales to improve the students' speaking skill. Folktales have characteristics that have the potential to facilitate the improvement of students' speaking skill. Moreover, the use of local folktales may also develop the students' knowledge and understandings of local culture related to everyday life, customs and norms. Having a good understanding of local culture is very valuable for the students. They can learn many aspects of life which may become useful for their life in the community [22].

Indonesia archipelago is very rich in folktales as thousands of island in Indonesia have their own folktales [11, 15]. Those folktales of course can be utilized to trigger the students' speaking motivation [22, 23]. Several reports of the use of folktales in English language teaching which have significant impacts towards the improvement of the students' learning achievement were conducted by [6, 9, 21, 23]. Moreover, [3] claims that the use of authentic material in teaching English certainly helps communicative learning activities implementation in classroom practices. [7] revealed that folktales help students to use vocabulary in context and language forms by engaging the students in story retelling during language learning in the classroom. Moreover, [30] claims that folktales can promote the ability in using the grammatical structures. Moreover, Folktales are certainly valuable benefits in their own right as folktales, as literature, as social and cultural expression, and as moral teaching [20, 22, 25].

Although there were many studies that have been conducted in regards to the use of folktales in teaching and other perspectives of folktales from cultural-historical aspects [e.g. see 5, 8, 12], sociological and psychological aspects [e.g. see 13, 27, 34], reflecting the wide-ranging and multidisciplinary interest in them. However, in the field of language teaching, the richness and potential of folktales seems to have been under-utilized in today's language classes [1, 32]. In this paper, therefore the usefulness of folktales in teaching speaking become primarily focus of the discussion. The main reasons of conducting this study was due to the facts that for language learners, speaking is an important language skill and folktale as one local cultural identity is an essential aspect of the students' life which they need to comprehensively understand for their sustainable living.

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

Considering the important usefulness of classroom action research, therefore classroom action research design was chosen as research method for this study. There were two teaching cycles undertaken consisting of four interconnected activities such as: planning, action, observation, and reflection. By employing this research design, the researcher was able to do step by step of scientific investigation.

2.2 Participants

The subject of the study was the EFL students of English Study program. There were 30 students chosen as the participants of this study. They were chosen as the subject of the

study because after doing interviews and initial reflection using speaking pre-test, the result showed the students still had difficulty in conveying their ideas, thought, opinion and information to other people. The initial reflection indicates that immediate and appropriate teaching learning processes need to be carried out to solve the students' problem.

2.3 Measures

The data obtained from the pre test and post tests were analyzed using Mean score formula in which the total score of the students was divided by the total number of the students, meanwhile, the questioanire was analyzed using rating scale 1 to 4 to figure out the students'changes behaviour and motivation during the learning cycle took place.

2.4 Procedure and Data Analysis

The data were collected by administering pre test, post test and questionnaire. Pre test was conducted before the treatment was given, while two post tests were conducted after treatments were given in every end of each cycle. Menwhile, a questionare was given at the end of teaching cycle. In every teaching cycle, there were three main indicators as the main concern related to the learners' speaking skill, namely fluency, understandability, and accuracy. Those three indicators were measured using scoring rubrics. The students were asked to perform their speaking through retelling a folktale, while the teacher immediately after the presentation asked questions concerning the students' opinion, ideas, feeling, or experiences related to the folktales.

3 Findings

The findings of the study can be tabulated as the following.

Table 1. Pre test and Post Test Result

	Test	Mean score
Initiaal reflection	Pre Test	45.22
Reflection one in cycle one	Post Test One	78.26
Reflection two in cycle two	Post Test Two	85.22

Refering to the table, the mean score of post test one and post test two were much higher than the mean score of the pre test.

Table 2. Result of the Questioanire

Option	Percentage	Qualification
Option A	50 %	Strongly agreed
Option B	40 %	Agreed
Option C	10 %	Undecided
Option D	0 %	Disagreed

Refering to the table, the prencentage of the students who were strongly agreed and agreed were much higher than those who were undecided and diagreed.

4 Results and Discussion

All of data needed for this study were collected in the classroom by using three instruments administered to the students of the study, namely: pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. The pre-test was administered to the students to obtain their pre-existing ability in speaking skill. The test was in the form of foktales retelling where the students were asked to retell the folktales they have chosen to present the folktale interactively [1, 10, 21]. Post-test was administered once in each cycle to measure the students' progress in speaking skill. There were three sets of raw scores obtained for the present study, those were pre-test, post test and questionire scores.

Pre-cycle was the first step in collecting the data. The researcher made an initial reflection in which the researcher interviewed the lecturers who taught Speaking skill in order to know the problems faced by the students in learning speaking. The result in initial reflection showed that the students had low motivation in learning speaking skill. Additionally, pre test mean score showing 45.22 which indicated that the students had very low ability in speaking. The result indicated that the students' speaking skill urgently needed improving [14], [15, 18, 21]. Therefore, the first cycle was conducted based on the previously made lesson plans.

While doing the teaching action in the first cycle, the researcher also observed the students' active involvement in the learning acivities. The observation was mainly focused on identifying the students' responses toward the application of the folktales as strategy in teaching speaking skill [14, 18, 21]. To collect the data needed for the present study, the post-test was administered to the students. The students were asked to retell the folktales they have chosen in front of the class [14, 16]. The students' speaking ability improved significantly which indicated by the mean figure of the first cycle which reached 78.26.

Considering the significant improvement of the students' speaking skill, the second cycle was started with rivising the lesson plans. The learning activities for the second cycles were completed with the use of pictures and multi media images as well more challeging speaking exercises [14], [17, 18]. The learning activities were conducted based on the learning activities using folktales as proposed by [32]. He suggests that the teaching of speaking through folktales in the simple form can be carried out using the procedures as the following, such as: (1) asking the students to tell a folktale, (2) asking the the students write it down, correcting the grammatical mistakes, (3) returning the written folktales back to the students and asking the students to read it, (4) asking the students revise and expanding their written folktales, (5) practicing the students to comprehend the vocabulary used in the written folktales, (6) asking the students retell the folktales in front of the class, while the others are listening, (7) asking the students to share their correction, (8) discussing the moral value of the folktales. This procedure helps the students involve in learning activity which also develop their other language skills [18], [22, 32].

In cycle two, it was observed that the students were more active in learning speaking. They found that learning speaking through folktales were interesting and challeging. The students' poitive attitude towards the use of folktales based instruction made their learning motivation improved [1, 18, 22, 32], consequently, their speaking ability was also improved. This can be clearly seen fromthe result of the post test two which showed mean figure of 85.22. This result showed that a better improvement was achieved by the students in comparison to this first cycle. Additionally, the questionnaire result showed that there were 50 % of the subjects who strongly agreed, 40 % of the subjects agreed, 10 % of the subjects neither agreed nor disagreed agreed and none of the subjects disagreed on the use of folktales in learning speaking. This questiionaire score indicated that the students really enjoyed in learning speaking through folktales based instruction [20, 21].

In conclusion, Folktales based instruction can be used to improve the students' speaking skill and the students' motivation in learning speaking. Folktales can be used to educate, inspire and enggage the students in various speaking activities and additionally folktales enrich the students' local cultural awareness. This research is expected to contribute to widen the horizon of the English teachers in developing more effective learning activities for the sake of the students' learning progress and to give ideas for the teachers to be more creative in teaching speaking.

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