

---

# IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH READING INVOLVING WHATSAPP APPLICATION

Eva Yuliyannah

English Education, Postgraduate, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University

## ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the role of reading in improving students' speaking skills involving ICT, namely WhatsApp Application (WA). The investigation is carried out in the Class Action Research at SMK YP 17 Cilegon, Office Administration Department twelfth grade. The using of WhatsApp is to optimize the language in use. Students make a WA group where they can share video and give comments. So, there is two classes, the real class and WA class. This study is carried out in three cycles, first cycle is still called pre-reading, students are not given reading text yet, indeed they make video conversation. The last two cycles implementing reading text/short story and making video conversation. On the observation of each cycle, by giving students reading text or short stories, students vocabulary improve. The improvement in vocabulary make them able to use it and more confident to speak.

**Keywords :** *Speaking skill, reading skill, Vocabulary, WhatsApp Application.*

## INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign language in Indonesia has been taught since Elementary level. However, when they are in Senior high school, students' English ability is still low. It can be seen from their performance in speaking. From the interview with students in class, most of them said that they are not confident to speak or even they cannot speak English because they don't know some words in English. It becomes a problem. Limited vocabulary becomes one obstacle in learning English.

How can they speak in English fluently if their knowledge in English words are low? Speaking is one of important skill when we learn language. The successful of language learning can be first seen from the speaking performance. The benchmark of successful language acquisition is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speaker of the language (Brown: 267).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that vocabulary becomes an important thing to learn. Reading is one way to improve their vocabulary. By exposing students to text they will get many vocabularies. Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning and the goal of reading is comprehension (Nunan: 2003, p.68).

ICT becomes an issue in today's education world, teachers should be creative in making and using media in teaching learning activity. One of ICT media can be used for teaching is WhatsApp application. WhatsApp is a chatting application where the users can also share video and pictures and no PIN required to get contacts, by saving the cell-phone numbers automatically we have already got the contact who install WhatsApp application. We can install this application freely from our smartphone. We can also make group in WA where we can communicate by text or phone call, share video, pictures or even documents.

The aim of this study is to investigate how reading text improve students' vocabulary which make them more confident to speak by involving WA in optimizing the language in use. Making video conversation and share it to WA group. The investigation is carried out in the Class Action Research at SMK YP 17 Cilegon, Office Administration Department twelfth grade.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Speaking**

Speaking is one of productive skill in language learning. One can be considered successful in language learning if he/she can speak the language fluently. Bygate (1991, p.3), emphasizes knowledge of the language, and skill in using this knowledge for an effective communication. Furthermore, Nunan (1995) argues that speaking is an important aspect of language learning whether it is as a second or a foreign language and the success is measured by the ability of language learners to carry out conversation in the language being learnt. Thus, speaking ability becomes an issue on language learning. Since speaking is an important skill to communicate with others, especially in this global era. One problem that make language learners hesitate to speak is the lack of vocabulary.

### **Reading**

Krashen and Terrell (1989, p.131) point out that reading enables learners to comprehend better which is an important factor that can develop language competence. Through reading, someone can learn the grammar, structure, and even culture of the language. Reading activity makes students open their mind to any context in the reading. It will make them richer in knowledge of the language and of course in the vocabulary as well. By reading, the reader can predict or guess the meaning of words, phrase or sentences which sometimes different from what they can get when they look up dictionary. Reading is one of the effective way to improve vocabulary.

### **WhatsApp**

ICT has become a popular issue on teaching-learning activity. Teachers are encouraged to be more update and creative to use technology and integrating it to teaching-learning activity. One of them is using WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a chatting application where the users can also share video and pictures and no PIN required to get contacts, by saving the cell-phone numbers automatically we have already got the contact who install WhatsApp application. We

can install this application freely from our smartphone. We can also make group in WA where we can communicate by text or phone call, share video, pictures or even documents. WhatsApp is one of popular application among others.

According to Wikipedia WhatsApp Messenger is a proprietary, cross-platform, encrypted instant messaging client for smartphones. It uses the Internet to send text messages, documents, PDF files, GIF images, video, user location and audio messages to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers. As of February 2016, WhatsApp had a user base of one billion making it the most popular messaging application. Research on language learning by using WhatsApp has been done by several researchers. On his research Job W. Mwakapina (2016) said that WA gave positive impact on students in Tanzania, participants reflected that WA has helped them positively by providing enough opportunities to improve English vocabulary, giving broader understanding of the topics discussed in class, improving English language interactions, giving prior-information of what will be discussed in class, giving opportunities for students to know their errors and mistakes, an opportunity for self and peer assessment and many other. While Riyanto (2013) said that using ICT (WhatsApp Application) is a good way to the development of the information and communication technology in this era. Thus, using WhatsApp can be the alternative to learn English

### **Integrating Reading and Speaking**

Reading is a window to open horizons.. Gerakan Literasi as proposed by Anies Baswedan the ex-Minister of Education, is one way to make young generation open their horizons and make them more open-minded. And so, in learning language. English language learning which has been applied in the curriculum since elementary level should give significant changes on the students performance. By reading students will get more knowledge about the culture, structure and grammar, which later will enrich their vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the essential and fundamental components of communication (Levitt, 1993).

The more reading you will do, the more you will increase your exposure to vocabulary that doesn't usually make its way into the spoken language (Cunningham, 1998). Successful language learning can be seen from speaking performance. If students have more knowledge on vocabulary they will not hesitate to speak English. They will be more confident to express their feeling orally.

Giving students short story is one way to make them read, since the language in short story is usually fun and interesting. There are messages or values that students can get after reading short stories. They short stories convey many ideas that can be learnt by students not only to improve vocabularies but also the moral values and culture.

By exposing students through reading, it will be effective for them to gain more and more vocabulary. If their vocabulary improve, they will be more confident to speak and to express their feeling orally. It can be concluded that language learning can be said successful. Rubin and Olshtain (1977, p.97) also point out that through extensive reading learners learn much vocabulary. They emphasize the benefits of extensive reading as:

- üStudents develop an ability to gain pleasure and also satisfaction from reading on

their own in the language they are learning.

- They are exposed to the language in a more natural and less structured way. In other words, they get different unpressured feeling on the structure of the language since they read for pleasure, and not for a grade or a test.
- Extensive reading has also effect on other language skills such as writing and speaking.
- Extensive reading, or reading for pleasure, will help the students comprehend more and also continue to use the language after the instruction.

Therefore, exposing students through reading is an important way to improve vocabulary which will make the students more confident to speak. Reading and speaking are two important skills in learning language. By reading students learn the structure of the language which will improve their vocabulary while speaking is the way they express feeling in the language they learn.

### **Involving WhatsApp**

WhatsApp is used as a media in teaching-learning activity. Teacher creates off-line class in WhatsApp, so students still can learn outside the classroom. There will be two classes, the real class in the class room and the off-line class in WA. In WhatsApp, we can make group so students can discuss what they have read. They can share the new vocabulary they have got and give opinion about the story. To know students' confidence in speaking, teacher gives assignment to make conversation video in a group. Then, they have to share the video in WA group class. This activity, is not only to know their confidence in speaking but also to know their awareness in using ICT. By doing so, students will be more familiar in using their gadget for learning activity. By exposing them through reading short story, vocabulary improve. By making WA group class the language in use will be optimum and by letting them make video conversation, they will be more confident in using the language orally.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research uses Class Action Research in SMK YP 17 Cilegon, Office Administration Department twelve grade. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of reading in improving students' speaking skills involving ICT, namely WhatsApp Application (WA). There are three cycles, the first is called pre-reading, the second is while-reading, and the last is post-reading.

### **DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Pre-Reading Activity**

At the first step, students are given information about the activity they will have. Then, they are informed that they will have WA group class besides the real class. In WA class they can share and discuss about English. The students in class are divided into groups for making conversation video, that will be the first project for them. At this step, most students' performance are low. It can be seen from their answer, most of them are not confident to speak. In WA group they start to introduce themselves. They still use simple words of introduction. And in the video conversation they have made, some students still hesitate to speak, even some of

them still see the script/text when doing the conversation.

### **While Reading Activity**

At this step students are given several short stories. The story is simple and each story only consists of several paragraphs. In the real class they read the story and give comments on them, which story they like or dislike. At this step, only few students, about 5-6 students, are confident to talk in front of the class to share their comments. The discussion of the story continues in WA group class. They share their feeling about the story, the new vocabulary they get. In this step, students can make longer sentences / comments in WA, only few of them are not participate in giving comments. Then, they make a second project of video conversation. The conversation they made is better, they look more confident.

### **Post-Reading**

In this step, students are given a short story, but a little longer story. they discuss the story in the class. What is interesting from the story, the moral values and their experience related to the story. At this step, more students are confident to speak. They are more confident to stand in front of the class and give comments orally. The discussion continues in WA group, almost all of students get involved in the discussion. They can share their real experience related to the story. Then, they make the third project of video conversation. The conversation they have made is much better, they look much more confident and there's no students who read the text/script when doing the conversation.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that reading plays an important role in improving students' speaking skill. Since, through reading vocabulary improve, the improvement of vocabulary make students be more confident to speak. Reading gives students opportunity to learn language deeper. Short story is one selection that can be used to make reading more fun and interesting. A successful language learning can be seen from students performance in speaking.

Whatsapp is a chat application that give many advantages for users, especially students and teachers. WA as a media that can be used to optimize the language in use, where we can make group and discuss about anything we want or even share video.

Reading indeed, gives contribution in student's speaking skill through the improvement of vocabulary. While, WA gives contribution in optimizing the language in use.

The last, the writer welcomes any improvement suggestion toward this research. And hopefully, this research can give contribution for others teachers to involve WA in teaching-learning process. And, other idea in using WA as a media for teaching-learning is welcome.

## **REFERENCES**

- Brown, D . *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (2nd Ed)* . San Fransisco. Longman
- Bygate, M. (1991). *Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What Reading does for the Mind. *American Educator*, 8(15)
- Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1977). *Facilitating Language Learning: A Guidebook for the ESL/EFL Teacher*. N.Y: McGraw: Hill International Book Company.
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1989). *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. Pergamon: Prentice Hall.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1993). The architecture of normal spoken language use. In G. Blanken, J. Dittmann, H. Grimm, J. C. Marshall, & C. W. Wallesch (Eds.), *Linguistic disorders and pathologies: An international handbook* (pp. 1-15). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter
- Mwakapina, J.W. (2016). *WhatsApp Mobile Tool in Second Language Learning: Opportunities, Potentials and Challenges in Higher Education Settings in Tanzania*. International Journal of English Language Education. 4 (2). 70-90.
- Nunan, D. (1995). *Language Teaching Methodology; A Textbook for Teachers*. London: Phoenix ELT
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Riyanto, A. (2013). *English Language Learning Using 'WhatsApp' Application*. Retrieved from <https://akhmadriyantoblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/21/english-language-learning-using-whatsapp-application>.
- Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia .Retrieve from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WhatsApp>.