

The Effectiveness of Picture Drilling Technique in Improving Speaking Skill in English Subject for Students with Learning Disability

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Abstract – Special need students who do not speak fluently in English may find it difficult to use the language as their communication tool. This action research study was conducted on the special need students with learning disability in Integrated Special Education Program (ISEP). The main objective is to improve the students' ability in speaking English through construction of simple sentences using picture drilling technique. Action research model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) was used and modified according to the study needed. There were two students involved in this research. They were chosen because of the potential that they could have achieved when given appropriate intervention. Observation through intervention was conducted to achieve the objective. Data was collected through observation checklist, achievement checklist, videos and pictures, and classroom assessment (PBD). Finding showed that the usage of pictures with consistent drilling has improved the speaking skill of both students and they were able to upgrade their mastery level in speaking skill. They also showed higher level of confidence and motivation. This result indicated that the correct teaching method is important in learning English. Picture drilling technique is suggested to be used in other subjects at all level of students and the content can be modified based on the learning topics wanted.

Keywords – English Language, Learning Disability, Speaking Skill, Picture Drilling, Construction of Sentences

I. INTRODUCTION

English subject is learned as a second language in Malaysia. However, not all students can master the subject well especially when they do not understand it. Speaking is the basic skill and the first step to be mastered to enable someone to communicate well in the language. At school, it is vital to learn English at the early stage of education level so that when the kids reach their higher level, they have at least the ability to understand the language even though they might not be able to converse it correctly. Learning English gives opportunities to learn important skills such as listening and expressing opinions (Delaney, 2023).

Learning disability is a cognitive or intellect problem which causes someone not to be able to learn something (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2023). They are diagnosed by the authorized medical officer who verified that they cannot achieve normal standards of education like other normal children have at the same age. In Malaysia, kids who are diagnosed with learning disability are categorized as people with disabilities and they go to the normal schools which have special programs for the special need children. The program is called the Integrated Special Education Program

(ISEP). Zero Reject Policy (ZRP) in 2019 is in line with the No Children Left Behind (NCLB) policy in 2001. ZRP focuses on the equality in education access for all children with the special needs. Under ZRP, Special Education Division in 2019 has created more opportunities for the special kids to enroll in the mainstream schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2023).

Special need students need special techniques in learning English especially when it is not their primary communication language. English teachers have to be more creative and smarter in inventing and innovating the suitable tools and methods to encourage the interest of the teaching and learning process among the students. Nor and Rashed (2018) proved that attractive learning techniques gave deep impact to students by providing ample knowledge and drilling. Therefore, a teacher must have the required skills in diversifying his teaching method. This research will prove that those who cannot read well can speak good English as well. There is a way to polish their speaking skill without the compulsory to read words. It is by using the visual aid, pictures.

A study by Suhono et al. (2023) proved that repetition drilling technique improved students' speaking ability. It has the impact on students' learning outcomes and helps teachers to use it in the learning process. Another study conducted by Abu Samah (2022) supported that flash cards usage stimulated the special kids' speaking skill. A big book with pictures was created especially for this research to show that students could develop their speaking skill by using the pictures as an instructional tool to construct simple sentences followed by continued drilling.

II. RESEARCH FOCUS

The purpose of this study is:

- To identify the effectiveness of picture drilling technique to improve the speaking skill of the students with learning disability.

This research objectives are:

- To improve the speaking skill mastery level of students with learning disability from level 1 and 2 to level 3 and 4;
- To improve the researcher's teaching practice in English subject for the students with learning disability.

The research questions are:

- How to improve the speaking skill mastery level of the students with learning disability?

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- b) How the picture drilling technique can improve teacher's teaching practice in English subject for the students with learning disability?

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in one of the ISEP schools in Kuching City. Duration of the intervention program was about two months from April until May 2023. Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model (1988) was purposely used for this research. There were four elements identified in the model, which were plan, action, observation, and reflection. I decided to start the research based on reflection, followed by planning, action, and observation. Lastly, I did the second reflection to see whether objectives of the study were achieved.

Based on Figure 1, the first element in this research design is the reflection. It is important for teachers to evaluate their efficiency in teaching which gives them an opportunity to improve and strengthen their weaknesses to perform better in future. In this study, the researcher agreed that both participants had the ability to improve their English-speaking skill if they were given more time to learn and practice. They could love English more if they found the right ways to learn. Traditional way that had been practicing all this while was only through text books and videos, followed by question-and-answer sessions. The learning sessions ended when the written exercise was done. Communication skill was not given priority. Thus, learning content were not able to be memorized in the long term.

Planning is the stage where the researcher gathered all the ideas to create and innovate new teaching and learning (T&L) approach in order to develop the students' speaking skill and at the same time to rise the students' interest in learning English. *The Flash Book* was then created to achieve the mission. Timetable was planned accordingly as it needed one to one intervention sessions with the kids.

The third step is the implementation process where the plan was executed and the intervention was carried out. This process consumed more time than other process as it had to be done correctly and efficiently to obtain the best results. As evidence, every session of the intervention process was recorded visually and manually through videos, pictures and checklists.

The fourth step is the observation. Observation can be done by observing the behaviour, interviews and activities. The outcome indicates whether the objectives are achieved or not. Comparison between the pre-intervention and post-intervention process was conducted in this research to see the progress of the students before and after the use of *Flash Book*. Based on the observation, data analysis was made and summary was done by compiling all the results obtained in the evidence.

After completing the observations, once again the reflection took place. The results of the intervention should be finalized. If it was successful, then the intervention would end. Vice versa, it should be amended or new intervention must be carried out.

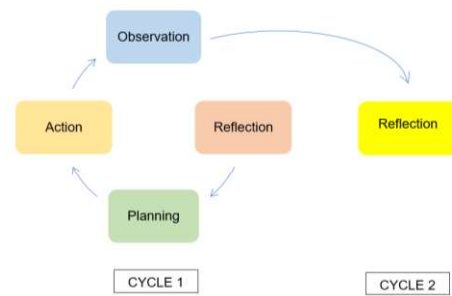


Figure 1. Action Research Model (modified Kemmis and McTaggart 1988)

Research Sample

Two ISEP students were selected as the participants in this research, aged 12 and 13. Both were diagnosed with learning disability when they were 8 years old. They have been studying in the school for more than 4 years. Currently, they are following the Year 5 KSSR for Special Education syllabus. English is not their first and even second language. Their speaking skills are limited and they are also weak in reading. They communicate well in Bahasa Malaysia as their mother tongue and understand all instructions given. However, English language is a little complicated for them. Their comprehension was limited. Hence, they are the best participants for this research.

Research Instrument

Observation forms and checklists were used to evaluate the progress and achievements of the respondents. The observation form consisted of five indicators to assess the students' growth. Meanwhile the checklist listed the progress level before and after the intervention. Video recordings were also included in this research as concrete evidences. Classroom assessment is another crucial document to record the students' achievement.

Measurement Method

Research data was gained through observation, data records, and video recordings. All the data taken were carried out by the researcher herself. Observation was done by keeping an eye on the participants along the three months research duration. Each observation session was transcribed in the transcript notes as primary data. The written data was recorded in the written notes and checklist.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained in this research was analyzed manually based on structured observation. The output is presented in tables for clear review. Document analysis was completed based on the results of Classroom Assessment (PBD) as shown in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1 below shows the Curriculum Documents used to evaluate both students in English subject. For this research, content standard 2.1 which is communicate simple information. The main focus is to describe people and things. The learning standard, 2.1.4 which is to describe people and

objects using suitable words and phrases. Therefore, *My Favourite Things* is selected as the most relevant topic where the students need to choose and describe about things they like. To achieve the objectives, teacher had created *The Flash Book* as the teaching and learning innovation and storytelling through picture drilling as the activity.

TABLE 1: STANDARD CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS

CONTENT STANDARD	FOCUS	LEARNING STANDARD	NOTES
	Describe people and things	Pupils can: 2.1.4 Describe people and objects using suitable simple sentences	Notes: • Based on any topics chosen by the teacher, preferably topics that pupils are familiar with and suit to their interest. • Teacher may encourage and motivate pupils to speak. • Teacher should cultivate pupils' thinking skills by asking HOTS questions. • Teacher may refer to the website given for ideas of activities that can be conducted. Teacher may simplify or modify according to the levels of the pupils. https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/parents-and-children/activities-for-children/a2-level/1w-03-describing-people-and-things/ https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/object-around-classroom Suggested activities: (a) listen and tell (b) role play

Note: Documents source from Curriculum Development Department, Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

Table 2 indicates the standard guidance of the classroom assessment for speaking skill. There are 6 performance levels with description to guide teachers in evaluating the students' achievements. Currently, Student A achieved level 1 and Student B achieved Level 2, which is limited in producing words and phrases. They also need a lot of guidance from teachers. After the intervention process, both students are expected to improve for level 3 and 4 which is to be able to response with minimum guidance and involve in simple interaction on familiar topic.

TABLE 2: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS GUIDE FOR SPEAKING ENGLISH

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	DESCRIPTORS FOR SPEAKING SKILLS	NOTES
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardly asks and responds to personal information, asks about and describes daily activities even with a lot of support. Hardly asks about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences even with a lot of support. Hardly retells very short basic stories even with a lot of support. 	Requires support to achieve curriculum target (A1 Mid)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows ability to ask and respond to personal information, ask about and describe daily activities with a lot of support. Shows ability to ask about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences with a lot of support. Shows ability to retell very short basic stories with a lot of support. 	On track to achieve curriculum target (A1 Mid)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows ability to ask and respond to personal information, ask about and describe daily activities with support. Shows ability to ask about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences with support. Shows ability to retell very short basic stories with support. 	Achieves expectations of curriculum target (A1 Mid)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows ability to ask and respond to personal information, ask about and describe daily activities with very minimal support. Shows ability to ask about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences with very minimal support. Shows ability to retell very short basic stories with very minimal support. 	On track to exceed expectations (A1 Mid)

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows ability to ask and respond to personal information, ask about and describe daily activities appropriately. Shows ability to ask about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences appropriately. Shows ability to retell very short basic stories appropriately. 	Working towards exceeding expectations (A1 Mid)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows ability to ask and respond to personal information, ask about and describe daily activities confidently. Shows ability to ask about, makes simple predictions and describes people and objects using simple sentences confidently. Shows ability to retell very short basic stories confidently. 	Exceeds expectations (A1 Mid)

Note: Documents source from Curriculum Development Department, Ministry of Education, Malaysia

IV. PLANNING

In this research, the researcher used Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction as the theoretical framework to explain the intervention progress when using *The Flash Book*. Table 3 shows *The Flash Book* which was created for this research used as the instructional tool to enhance the speaking skill of the students with intellectual disability by drilling on pictures. There are five keywords with pictures chosen which were used to construct five sentences based on selected pictures. Drilling was done continuously until the students were able to phrase the sentences by themselves. Through drilling, their memories could retain the information longer and pictures help to strengthen them. This *Flash Book* was made flexible so that the keywords and pictures could be changed depend on the topic learnt.

TABLE 3: THE FLASH BOOK

TITLE	KEYWORD 1	KEYWORD 2
KEYWORD 3	KEYWORD 4	KEYWORD 5

Printed learning resources are easy to prepare and used. It is relevant with the usage of *The Flash Book*. There are three implications of the theory in teaching and learning process. The first one is the concrete object that could be touched physically. *The Flash Book* enables the students to touch it and look at it closely. This stimulates their interest in learning when they could see and touch it. The second implication is the nine-level of learning process. Basically, the learning process would begin from the easiest one until the most complicated ones. This is implemented through the intervention process which can be seen in Figure 2. The third one is to enable the students to identify special features of the stimulus, which is *The Flash Book*. Each keyword helps the students to gain ideas on what sentences to construct.

Gagne learning theory by Robert M. Gagne stated that verbal association was one of the key processes in the development of language skills. The learning concept involved ability development to make consistent response to different stimuli and generalize. This model is applicable to both teachers and students. According to Lo and Hsieh (2019), Gagne's model helped educators to improve teaching

skills required in teaching communication. This means that teachers should practice speaking skills in order to speak or teach fine. Their capability could stimulate the students' interest and confidence in speaking as well. Figure 2 shows the instructional design of Gagne's learning theory.



Figure 2: Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction 1965

Table 4 shows the description of nine key points of Gagne's Learning Theory that indicated clearly the differences between the conventional practice and the intervention planning of this research.

TABLE 4: INTERVENTION PLANNING TABLE

Learning Theory	Key Points of Learning Theory	Conventional Practice	Planning of Intervention or Current Study
Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction	Correlate to and address the conditions of learning.	Use the textbooks and worksheet to write.	Use a creative and attractive hand-made learning aid.
	1. Gain the learners' attention	Reading from the textbook and worksheet.	Introduce <i>The Flash Book</i> .
	2. Inform learners about the objectives	Learners are not informed. Complete the task given only.	Able to construct at least 5 sentences.
	3. Stimulate recall of prior learning	Learners are not asked about prior learning.	Ask about the students' favourite things.
	4. Present the content by giving instruction and cues.	Inactive learning strategies. Student-centered method.	Effective instruction with demonstration are given.
	5. Provide learning guidance	Learners are fully guided and answers are available in the textbook.	Implement pre, during and post intervention stages.
	6. Elicit performance (practice)	No continued drilling after learning session ends.	Consistent pictures drilling – effective technique.
	7. Provide feedback	Teacher seldom provides feedback.	Teacher consistently provides feedback.

8. Assess performance	One time observation which makes the students unfairly assessed.	Record the observation results and outcomes.
9. Enhance retention and transfer to the job.	No further continuity in topic learned.	Students tell the story about their favourite things.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

Table 5 shows the implementation of intervention process that had been planned in each learning session conducted for eight weeks. All the outcomes and evidence were recorded in the checklists and videos based on the reflection data obtained for each phase.

TABLE 5: THE INTERVENTION PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION

Level	Phase	Description
Week 1-2	Before intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morning talk was carried out with the students by asking a few questions; what are their favourite food, drink, flower, pet, and fruit. Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of words were less than 5. Answers were fully guided. Level of confidence was low. Memory level was low. Mastery level 1 and 2.
Week 3-6	During intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce <i>The Flash Book</i> to the students. Intervention sessions were done on one-to-one basis. Each student was provided at least 15 minutes per session. One keyword was drilled until the students achieved the target. The sessions continued until the fifth keyword. Drilling was done on words pronunciation followed by construction of sentences. Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of words increased to 6. Answers were guided minimally. Confidence level increasing. Memory level increasing. Mastery level 2 and 3.
Week 7-8	After intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were doing self-drilling. Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of words increased to 8. Answers without guidance. Confidence level is high. Memory level is high. Mastery level 3 and 4.

VI. RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Table 6 and Table 7 show the achievement progress of both participants based on the close observation done by their English teacher. First indicator is the number of words or vocabulary used during intervention. The results show that Student A and Student B have increased their number of words which is more than 5 words as targeted. At the end of

the intervention program, both students did not need full guidance to phrase the sentences constructed, as can be seen in the second indicator. For the third indicator, Student A scored level 3 while Student B scored level 4 in speaking skill for their classroom assessment, which is higher than expected, as referred in Table 2.

The students have shown fully commitment and motivation to learn. The memory level has increased based on their ability to remember the sentences. This evidence supports previous study by Bao and Liu (2021) which stated that self-esteem, motivation and anxiety effected the efforts and active participation in learning second language. The higher level the factors, the higher level of efforts and participation. Drilling technique could be the main reason for this achievement which contributes to the fifth indicator, confidence level. Videos recording showed that both students were highly motivated and enthusiast in completing the learning session with *the Flash Book*. The videos of Student A and B are available through the QR code provided.

TABLE 6: STUDENT A'S ACHIEVEMENT PROGRESS (OBSERVATION CHECKLIST)

Before Intervention	Indicators	After Intervention
Less than 3 words.	Number of words	Increased to more than 5 words.
Full guidance in construction of sentences.	Teachers' guidance	Minimum guidance in construction of sentences.
Speaking skill level 1.	PBD Mastery Level	Speaking skill level 3.
Not able to remember previous learning.	Memory Level	Able to remember previous learning.
Unable to pronounce words without guidance.	Confidence level	Able to pronounce words without guidance.



Intervention process videos



TABLE 7: STUDENT B'S ACHIEVEMENT PROGRESS (OBSERVATION CHECKLIST)

Before Intervention	Indicators	After Intervention
Less than 5 words.	Number of words	Increased to more than 8 words.
Full guidance in construction of sentences.	Teachers' guidance	No guidance in construction of sentences.
Speaking skill level 2.	PBD Mastery Level	Speaking skill level 4.
Not able to remember previous learning.	Memory Level	Able to remember previous learning.
Unable to pronounce words without guidance.	Confidence level	Able to pronounce words without guidance.



Intervention process videos



Table 8 shows the achievement progress for Student A and Student B. There were three phases of the intervention; pre, during and post. Pre-intervention figured that two

sessions were carried out for both students. Students A were able to give short answer for keyword 1 (Food) and keyword 5 (Fruit), while Student B managed to answer Keyword 1 (Food), 2 (Drink) and 5 (Fruit).

The intervention with guidance sessions were completed for six sessions. Both students scored well and achieved positive results at the end of the intervention program with the ability to master all the keywords with guidance.

Two sessions of post-intervention indicated the success of the program when both students were able to speak well without guidance.

TABLE 8: STUDENT A AND B ACHIEVEMENT CHECKLIST

KEY WORD SESSION	1 FOOD		2 DRINK		3 PET		4 FLOWER		5 FRUIT	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
PRE-INTERVENTION										
Session 1	√	√	x	√	x	x	x	x	√	√
Session 2	√	√	x	√	x	x	x	x	√	√
DURING INTERVENTION										
Session 3	√	√	√	√	x	√	x	x	√	√
Session 4	√	√	√	√	x	√	x	x	√	√
Session 5	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Session 6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Session 7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Session 8	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
POST-INTERVENTION										
Session 9	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Session 10	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Indicator:

x	Not achieved
√	Achieved

VII. SUMMARY

Students with learning disability have the capability to learn English and master the speaking skill by implementing the right method and technique in their learning process. A teacher plays an important role to plan and facilitate the process of teaching and learning so that the objectives could be reached. Innovation with creativity could enhance the progress. Anastasia (2022) stressed that creating a pleasant learning environment were able to motivate children with learning disability. However, the teaching aid must come together with effective teaching technique. Consistent drilling is the best practice in assisting the students to boost their communication skill. Yesmin et al. (2020) agreed that regular practice could improve the language ability of the special need children. It also promotes positivity in children's attitude and raised awareness of peers with disability (Giagazoglou & Papadaniil, 2018). The research conducted has achieved its main objectives. Both students have successfully upgraded their mastery level in speaking.

The use of *The Flash Book* with consistent drilling technique is really effective to attract students' interest in learning English. These findings are vital for future reference of English teachers and special need parents. *The Flash Book* can also be used for the mainstream students with lower grades including the Pre Schools. There are improvements of the students' speaking proficiency and increasing their level of motivation and self-confidence. This type of learning aid

is adjustable, amendable, simple and touchable which made it so special and relatable to students. Any teachers of any subjects are able to create the learning aid based on their creativity and ideas based on the students' ability, knowledge, and skill. The journey of conducting this action research gives invaluable experience to the researcher and it gives chances to reflect the teaching method towards achieving new knowledge and better practice.

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