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The Use of Picture-Based Mediator to Enhance Spontaneous Speaking Skills of EFL Learners at Junior High School

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Abstract. This study investigates the use of picture-based mediator to enhance the spontaneous speaking skills of EFL learners at the junior high school level, where speaking remains one of the most challenging skills due to nervousness, hesitation, and limited vocabulary. The research was conducted at one of the junior high schools in Sidoarjo, East Java, involving 36 eighth-grade students using a quantitative pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach, with data analyzed through a paired sample t-test. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' speaking performance, with a mean gain of 17.78 points, a significance value of 0.000, and a t-value of -12.323, while the percentage of students in the Poor category decreased substantially from 50% to 5.6% after the treatment. It is therefore concluded that picture-based media significantly and positively affects EFL learners' spontaneous speaking skills by reducing anxiety, activating background knowledge, and encouraging more natural verbal interaction, which aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizing meaningful interaction and authentic contexts in language learning.

Keywords- picture-based media, speaking skills, EFL learners, pre-experimental, junior high school, spontaneous speaking

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan media berbasis gambar untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara spontan peserta didik EFL di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama, dimana berbicara menjadi salah satu keterampilan paling menantang akibat rasa gugup, keraguan, dan keterbatasan kosakata. Penelitian dilaksanakan di salah satu SMP di Sidoarjo, Jawa Timur, melibatkan 36 siswa kelas delapan dengan desain pra-eksperimen kuantitatif pendekatan satu kelompok pretes-postes dan analisis menggunakan uji t sampel berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada kinerja berbicara siswa dengan rata-rata peningkatan sebesar 17,78 poin, nilai signifikansi .000, dan nilai t sebesar -12,323, serta penurunan persentase siswa pada kategori Kurang dari 50% menjadi 5,6% setelah perlakuan diberikan. Disimpulkan bahwa media berbasis gambar berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keterampilan berbicara spontan peserta didik EFL dengan cara mengurangi kecemasan, mengaktifkan pengetahuan latar belakang, dan mendorong interaksi verbal yang lebih alami, sejalan dengan prinsip Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif (CLT) yang menekankan interaksi bermakna dan konteks autentik dalam pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata Kunci - media berbasis gambar, keterampilan berbicara, peserta didik EFL, pra-eksperimen, sekolah menengah pertama, berbicara spontan

I. INTRODUCTION

English is widely utilized in academic, professional, and social settings. Therefore, the ability to speak and express ideas verbally is an essential aspect for students learning English as a foreign language. Speaking is an essential skill since people frequently share their thoughts, knowledge, and life experiences with others [1]. Speaking is frequently seen as the most difficult skill for students to acquire in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This is because English is not the language used by students all the time in their learning environment. Usually, students know nothing about how to express what they want to say, which makes it difficult for them to participate actively in conversation. Brown states that speaking is a productive skill that expresses ideas verbally [2]. Five elements that determine a person's speaking quality are comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Among these elements, fluency serves as a crucial indicator of communicative competence because it reflects a learner's ability to speak naturally, smoothly, and spontaneously. Spontaneous speaking is an important skill for EFL students because

real-life communication rarely allows speakers sufficient time to prepare or memorize responses. Students are expected to respond immediately in daily interactions, both in the classroom and in real-world settings. Therefore, the ability to speak spontaneously reflects students' communicative competence and readiness to use English in authentic situations.

Spontaneous speaking refers to the ability to produce speech in real time without relying on prior preparation or scripts. According to Pahalawan, spontaneous speaking is a form of oral production in which speakers generate utterances immediately based on contextual understanding, and the content of the speech cannot be predicted in advance [3]. Similarly, language learning materials describe spontaneous talk as unscripted speech in which speakers generate ideas and express them directly without preparation, reflecting authentic language use [4]. Furthermore, an international study defines spontaneous speaking as the ability to produce and organize speech immediately without prior preparation, emphasizing the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in expressing ideas in real-life situations [5]. Therefore, spontaneous speaking not only highlights the production of unscripted utterances but also the cognitive abilities that enable individuals to express ideas appropriately in real-time contexts.

However, in many EFL classrooms, students still face various challenges in developing their speaking fluency. During preliminary classroom observation in one of the junior high schools in Sidoarjo, students frequently struggle with their lack of confidence when speaking English in front of others. Students also have a fear of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, and word choice that can lead to hesitation and reduced participation in speaking English. Another challenge, speaking often taught in a controlled, scripted manner which limits student's ability to communicate spontaneously. This lack of spontaneity reflects a weakness in students' speaking fluency, as they often rely on memorized expressions rather than producing speech naturally. Student's ability to speak fluently without relying too much on memorized scripts is essential for achieving communicative competence.

These challenges are not unique to the observed classroom. The lack of opportunities for real-life speaking practice further affects student's speaking abilities. In some classes, the use of English is limited only to certain activities, leaving students with insufficient practice to use the language naturally. The learning atmosphere sometimes places more emphasis on writing or reading, giving speaking activities minimal time and attention. This imbalance can hinder student's development in oral communication skills. Similar problems were reported by [6], who revealed that EFL learners often feared making mistakes and showed low confidence in speaking English. Another study also highlighted that students feel embarrassed and find it difficult to string words together to form a coherent sentence [1]. In addition, several studies reported that many students still struggle to improve their speaking skills because a lack of practice chances, communication anxiety, and less participatory learning methodologies are all factors that hinder the development of these abilities [7]. Furthermore, students' lack of formal or casual English speaking experience with their peers, causing them to feel shy and find it difficult to produce proper words or dialogues because they were fearful of making mistakes [8].

To overcome these issues, one of the ways is by using simple and accessible media such as pictures. Pictures provide visual prompts that encourage students to generate ideas instantly and respond orally without relying on memorized texts. To minimize misunderstanding during speaking activities, teachers can use the picture as media through various techniques in order to achieve the goal of speaking [9].

The use of picture in English speaking learning encourages students to

produce and memorize more ideas so it can make their speaking skill increased [6]. Media is defined as anything, including people, materials, or events, that can create conditions supporting students in gaining knowledge, skills, and attitudes [10]. In speaking activities, pictures can provide meaningful situations that encourage learners to share their ideas orally. This idea is also supported by the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize meaningful communication and authentic contexts in language learning [11]. Through pictures, students are guided to respond orally in real-time, which promotes more natural and spontaneous speech production. As visual media, pictures are believed to be able to stimulate and guide the students in speaking activities, because pictures serve for illustration, foster students' creativity, accommodate their interests, encourage them to share their thoughts and also make the teaching and learning process more engaging and entertaining [12]. Pictures function is more than merely a teaching tool, by depicting places, objects, and people they become an essential component of students' learning experiences that the teachers must help their students to cope with [13]. By integrating visual aids, students are encouraged to participate actively, creating a more enjoyable and relaxed experience [14].

Among the various types of pictures used in language learning, Wright describes single stimulating pictures as one category of visual materials that focused on image functioning as a specific reference stimulus to trigger verbal responses [15]. Unlike picture series that guide students through sequential events, a single picture requires students to independently observe, interpret, and immediately produce oral responses based on their own understanding, making it especially suitable for developing spontaneous speaking. Supporting this, Harmer explains that pictures can be utilized in a variety of speaking activities, including drills, communicative games, prediction tasks, and discussions that motivate students to describe, anticipate, and verbally respond to what they observe [16]. Moreover, pictures can contribute to reducing speaking anxiety by providing learners with a clear visual context that helps them organize their thoughts and communicate their ideas more effectively. For this reason, a single picture was selected in the present study to stimulate students' spontaneous oral responses during real-time classroom activities.

Some of the quantitative studies shown that pictures can significantly enhance students' speaking performance. For example, a one-group pretest-posttest revealed an increase in scores between the pretest and posttest, which means that the students' speaking skills can be enhanced by using picture series. Specifically, the average pretest score was 72.43, while the posttest score increased to 77.79 [17]. Another similar study also revealed that the use of pictures improved students' speaking abilities. The data shows that before the treatment was applied, the students' speaking skills were at an average score of 25.5 or level 1 (limited). After the treatment using pictures, students' speaking scores significantly increased to 42.3, rising to level 2 (intermediate). Therefore, it can be concluded that pictures can help students enhance their speaking abilities by utilizing visualization to stimulate speaking ideas [18]. In addition, the paired sample t-test in another study revealed that the usage of images significantly improved students' speaking scores, with statistical results showing $p \leq 0.05$ [19]. Similarly, in a paired sample t-test, it was revealed that picture media significantly improved learners' speaking performance. And there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results ($p < 0.05$) [20]. Furthermore, a study also revealed that students' speaking skills are significantly improved after the application of picture media, which supports the effectiveness of visual media in teaching speaking [14]. Overall, these results offer strong quantitative proof that picture media can enhance students' speaking abilities by facilitating more active verbal participation, lowering anxiety, and boosting idea development.

In previous studies, pictures were commonly used as speaking materials that present familiar and contextual descriptive topics for students. These materials typically include pictures of people, places, animals, or objects that can be described based on their physical characteristics, appearance, and features. Such visual materials encourage learners to express ideas orally by describing what they observe, enabling them to generate ideas spontaneously without relying on memorized expressions. By using picture-based descriptive topics that are close to students' real-life contexts, learners are more likely to speak naturally and confidently, which supports the development of spontaneous speaking skills.

The gap of this research lies in the fact that many previous studies used pictures as a medium in English language learning, but those studies focused on writing skills and vocabulary mastery. Research discussing speaking skills especially spontaneous ability is still very limited and underexplored. Furthermore, previous studies often addressed speaking skills in general without delving deeper into spontaneous and creative speaking abilities in real-life situations and conditions. This study aims to investigate whether the use of pictures as a medium in learning can significantly improve junior high school students' spontaneous speaking skills as English foreign language (EFL) learners. Unlike most previous studies that focused on writing and vocabulary aspects, this research aims to investigate whether the use of picture-based media significantly improves students' spontaneous speaking skills so that they become more fluent and confident without relying too much on memorized texts. By addressing this issue, this research aims to provide new insights on how picture-based media significantly affect the eighth-grade students' spontaneous speaking performance in the context of English learning at the junior high school level.

II. METHOD

Research Design

The researcher employed a quantitative approach with pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The design of this study is presented in the following table.

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O_1	X	O_2

O_1 = pretest (before treatment), X = treatment (picture-based media), O_2 = posttest (after treatment)

One class received the intervention (picture-based media) and completed oral speaking pretest and posttest to measure changes in spontaneous communication. A pre-test conducted by researchers aimed to identify student's ability before the treatment, and the posttest was conducted to compare the student's achievement result after the treatment. The treatment was conducted in a single learning sessions, in which picture-based media were utilized to encourage students to speak spontaneously. During this session, students were presented with selected pictures and asked to provide spontaneous spoken responses based on the visual prompts. The purpose of this activity was to provide a meaningful learning experience that stimulated students to engage in spontaneous oral communication without prior preparation. To measure students' spontaneous speaking performance, the researcher used an oral speaking assessment rubric as the primary instrument in both pretest and posttest.

As stated by Creswell and Creswell [21], an experimental design involves deliberately manipulating a variable to determine their effect on an outcome while keeping other conditions as

constant as possible. In this study, picture-based media functioned as the treatment variable, while spontaneous speaking performance was the dependent variable. This design was chosen because the study only included one class, and the effectiveness of the treatment was determined by comparing student performance before and after the treatment. Although a control group was not employed, this approach was considered appropriate given the limited number of available classes and the exploratory nature of the study [22].

Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were eight-grade students enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program at a state junior high school in Sidoarjo, East Java. The participants consisted of 36 students from a single class. The sample was selected using purposive sampling with the purpose of selecting a class that would benefit most from the treatment. The class was identified by the English teacher as having low spontaneous speaking ability, making it appropriate group to examine whether picture-based media could significantly improve their speaking performance. The class was a typical EFL class where English was taught as a foreign language. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and permission was obtained from the school principal and English teachers prior to data collection.

Research Instruments

Spontaneous speaking was obtained by instructing learners to speak for 1-2 minutes without notes and each participant was given 5 guiding questions. The guiding questions were adapted from *English Nusantara Grade VIII* book, and were modified to suit the topic in this research. This task was designed to assess students' ability to produce spontaneous oral communication. Performances were audio and video recorded to ensure accurate assessment. Speaking performance is evaluated using an analytical assessment rubric adapted from Brown [23] which was used to assess spontaneous speaking. The rubric functioned as the scoring instrument to generate quantitative data for analysis. It includes four components: pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, each rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Higher scores indicate stronger performance in each component. The rubric used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Assessment Rubric

Aspects	Score 5 (Excellent)	Score 4 (Good)	Score 3 (Average)	Score 2 (Poor)	Score 1 (Very Poor)
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and easy to understand	Minor pronunciation errors but meaning is clear	Some pronunciation errors that sometimes affect meaning	Many pronunciation errors that affect understanding	Pronunciation is mostly unclear and difficult to understand
Grammar	Uses grammar correctly with few errors	Some grammar errors but meaning is clear	Makes frequent grammar error; the message is sometimes unclear	Many grammar errors that confuse meaning	Has very limited ability to use basic sentence patterns
Vocabulary	Uses appropriate and varied vocabulary	Uses enough vocabulary to express ideas	Limited vocabulary and often repeats the same words	Very limited vocabulary, making expression difficult	Extremely limited vocabulary; cannot express basic ideas
Fluency	Speaks smoothly with natural pace; very few pauses	Mostly fluent; some hesitation but meaning clear	Often pauses but can continue speaking	Frequent pauses and broken sentences	Unable to speak smoothly

Scoring Procedure

The scoring process was conducted by the researcher who assessed each students' recorded speaking performance based on the four aspects presented in the rubric. To maintain consistency

in the assessment, the researcher carefully reviewed every video recording and applied the scoring criteria while assessing every performance. This procedure was applied consistently to both pretest and posttest recordings to maintain objectivity in the scoring process.

Picture-Based Media

This study used single printed pictures as the instructional media during the treatment session to stimulate students' spontaneous speaking ability. Printed pictures were considered suitable because they are easy to implement in individual or group speaking practice, do not require additional electronic devices, and allow students to focus directly on the visual stimulus without distraction. The pictures used in this study were developed by the researcher based on materials from the English Nusantara textbook and were modified to suit the purpose of this study. A total of seven pictures were prepared for the treatment sessions representing three topics: people, places, and animals. Each picture represented a different topic to avoid repetition and to provide students with variation in speaking practice. Each picture was designed to be simple and clear enough for eight-grade students, allowing them to respond spontaneously based on their own understanding of the picture. Sample pictures used in the treatment are presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Examples of Picture-Based Media Used in Treatment Sessions (People, Place, Animal)

Data Collection Procedures

The data in this study were collected through a series of structured procedures consisting of three main stages: a pre-test, a treatment, and a post-test. These procedures were designed in accordance with the pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, in which a single group of participants was assessed before and after receiving a treatment without the presence of a control group. The primary aim of this data collection process was to investigate whether the use of picture media had a significant effect on students' spontaneous speaking ability. The procedures of the research are explained as follows.

1. Stage 1: Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted before any treatment was given in order to collect initial data about the students' speaking ability, specifically in describing people, places, and animals. The main goal of the pre-test was to find out how well students could describe things using their own words without any visual help or prior instruction related to the topic.

Before the pre-test started, the researcher explained the procedure clearly to all students so they would understand what they needed to do. Students were told that they would be asked to answer several spoken questions one by one, and that their answers would be recorded for scoring purposes. The classroom was arranged to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible so that students would not feel nervous and could speak more naturally.

In this stage, students were asked to answer five guiding questions verbally without the help of any pictures or visual materials. The questions were created to encourage students to produce descriptive speech across three topic areas: person, place, and animal. These topics were chosen because they are common and familiar to students at this level of learning. The guiding questions used in the pre-test were as follows:

1. Tell me about your best friend. (person)
2. Describe your classroom. (place)
3. Tell me about your favourite animal. (animal)
4. Describe your school. (place)
5. Tell me about your favourite teacher. (person)

2. Stage 2: Treatment

The treatment was conducted in one session consisting of two lesson periods due to the limited time allocated by the school, as the research was carried out during the examination period. Despite the limited schedule, the treatment was carefully planned to remain comprehensive by integrating three topics simultaneously. The topic is describing people, describing place, and describing animals using pictures as the primary media. Each topic was addressed through different activity formats to maximize student's speaking exposure within the available time. Before students participated in the speaking tasks, the researcher demonstrated how to describe each topic orally, followed by vocabulary building to support students' language production.

The first topic was describing people. The session began with a warm up activity called *Guess Who Am I*, where the students were asked to stand in front of the class and describe one of their classmates without revealing the person's name, while the other students tried to guess the identity of the individual being described. This activity was intended to activate students' prior knowledge and familiarize them with descriptive vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality. After the warm up, a vocabulary building was carried out to expand and strengthen students' understanding of relevant terms. Students then engaged in a group speaking activity in which they two were divided into groups and each group was provided with a picture containing several people. Students discussed and observed the picture but they were not allowed to take notes or memorize information. Afterwards, each group presented an oral description of the people shown in the picture, including details about their physical appearance and personality.

The second topic was describing place. After the vocabulary building session, students participated in a speaking corner activity where two pictures of different locations were displayed on the classroom wall. Students stood in a line, and one by one they approached a picture and produced a spontaneous sentence describing what they saw before giving the next turn to the next student. This activity was designed to encourage students to respond verbally in a spontaneous manner without prior planning.

The final topic was describing animals. After completing the vocabulary building, students engaged in an individual speaking task. Students were invited to the front of the class one by one to describe an animal picture orally. They were encouraged to speak spontaneously describing features such as the animal's physical appearance and behavior.

3. Stage3:Post-test

The post-test followed the same format and procedure as the pre-test. Students were asked to respond orally to five guiding questions using descriptive language. The guiding questions used in the post-test were as follows:

1. Describe your mother or father. (person)
2. Describe your house. (place)
3. Describe your favorite classmate. (person)
4. Describe your favorite place. (place)
5. Describe an animal you are afraid of. (animal)

Data Analysis

The collected data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively. Each speaking performance was rated using the analytic rubric adapted from Brown, which includes four aspects: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency [23]. Each aspect received a numerical score, and the total of the scores indicated the students' overall speaking ability. The total score of each student was calculated by adding the scores from the four aspects. Since the maximum total score was 20, the final score was converted into a scale of 100 using the following formula:

$$\text{Final Score} = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{20} \times 100$$

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H₀: There is no significant effect of using picture-based media on the eighth-grade students' spontaneous speaking performance.

H₁: There is a significant effect of using picture-based media on the eighth-grade students' spontaneous speaking performance.

The pre-test and the post-test scores were then analyzed using SPSS to examine the effectiveness of the treatment. Before testing the hypothesis, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. After that, the hypothesis was tested using the appropriate statistical test based on the result of the normality test. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. If the p-value is less than 0.05, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, indicating a significant effect of picture-based media on students' spontaneous speaking performance. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant effect.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the result of the research and the discussion of the data analysis that has been conducted by the researcher. This study aims to determine the effect of treatment on student's speaking ability through a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The data were collected from the students' scores obtained before and after the treatment was implemented.

In this chapter, the researcher provides the result of the data analysis, which includes descriptive statistics, normality test, and hypothesis testing. The descriptive statistics were used to describe the students' pre-test and post-test scores, and the normality test was performed to assess whether

the data were normally distributed. Furthermore, the hypothesis test was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the students' scores before and after the treatment.

Moreover, this chapter also discusses the results' interpretation and relates them to the theories and previous studies relevant to the research topic. The discussion aims to explain how the treatment affected the students' speaking ability and to answer the research question of this study.

Research Findings

1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	36	25.00	70.00	48.47	10.94
Post-test	36	50.00	90.00	66.25	9.73

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test scores of 36 EFL learners who participated in this study. The statistics included minimum score, maximum score, mean score, and standard deviation. The result of descriptive statistics is presented in the table below.

As shown in Table 2, the mean score of the pre-test was 48.47 with a standard deviation of 10.94, while the mean score of the post-test increased to 66.25 with a standard deviation of 9.74. This indicates a mean gain of 17.78 points, suggesting that students' spontaneous speaking skill improved after the implementation of picture-based media. The decrease in standard deviation from 10.94 to 9.74 further indicates that students' scores became more consistent after the treatment.

To provide a more detailed picture of students' performance, the score distribution was further categorized based on the assessment rubric. The category distribution of pre-test and post-test scores is presented in Figure 2.

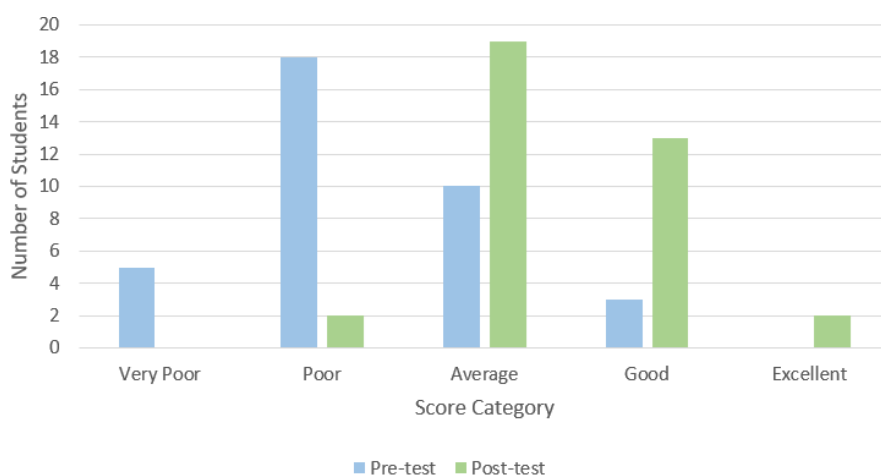


Figure 2. Chart Category Distribution of Pre-test and Post-test (N=36)

Table 3. Score Category Distribution

Category	Score Range	Pre-test (f)	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (f)	Post-test (%)
Excellent	85-100	0	0.0%	2	5.6%
Good	70-84	3	8.3%	13	36.1%
Average	55-69	10	27.8%	19	52.8%
Poor	40-54	18	50.0%	2	5.6%
Very Poor	0-39	5	13.9%	0	0.0%

As presented in Table 3, before the treatment was implemented, half of the students were reclassified in the Poor category, and none of them achieved the Excellent level. After the treatment, a significant improvement could be seen. The percentage of students in the Poor category dropped sharply to 5.6%, while 36.1% of the students moved into the Good category and 5.6% succeeded in reaching Excellent. These findings visually confirm the substantial improvement indicated by the mean gain of 17.78 points.

2. Test of Normality

Before conducting the paired sample t-test, a normality test was carried out to determine whether the data fulfilled the assumptions necessary for parametric analysis. The results of the test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test Speaking	.111	36	.200*	.967	36	.340
Post-test Speaking	.134	36	.098	.960	36	.218

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

As presented in Table 4, the Shapiro-Wilk test results showed that the significance value of the pre-test was .340 and the post-test was .218, both of which are greater than .05. This indicates that both datasets were normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality was satisfied and the paired sample t-test was appropriate to use as the inferential statistical analysis in this study.

3. Paired Sample T-Test

Following the normality test, a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Paired Sample T-Test Results

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	48.47	10.94	1.82			
Post-test	66.25	9.74	1.62			
Difference	-17.78	8.66	1.44	-12.323	35	.000

As presented in Table 5, the paired sample t-test produced a t-value of -12.323 with 35 degrees of freedom and a significance value of .000, which was lower than the significance level of .05. This finding shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, indicating that the implementation of picture-based media significantly enhanced the spontaneous speaking ability of EFL learners.

The results of this study indicate that picture-based media significantly enhanced the spontaneous speaking abilities of EFL learners. This can be seen from the improvement in the students' mean scores, which increased from 48.47 in the pre-test to 66.25 in the post-test, resulting in a mean gain of 17.78 points. In addition, the distribution of score categories showed a considerable change in students' performance. Before the treatment, most students (50%) were classified in the Poor category, and none of them achieved the Excellent level. However, after the treatment was implemented, the percentage of students in the Poor category dropped sharply to 5.6%, while 36.1% of the students reached the Good category and 5.6% succeeded in attaining Excellent. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the use of picture-based media gave a significant and positive contribution to the students' spontaneous speaking performance.

Discussion

The improvement in students' spontaneous speaking ability may be linked to the characteristics of picture-based media as a teaching tool. As cited in Arsyad, Gerlach and Ely explain that media includes any person, material, or event that can create conditions supporting learners in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes [10]. In speaking activities, picture-based media provides meaningful situations that encourage students to express their ideas orally and more spontaneously. By using pictures as visual stimuli, students receive contextual support that helps lessen cognitive burden and reduce hesitation during speaking activities. As a result, students can concentrate more on delivering their ideas rather than thinking about what topic to talk about. This is especially important in spontaneous speaking tasks, where learners are required to produce language directly without extensive preparation.

This idea is further supported by Wright, who states that pictures should not be viewed simply as decorative components, but rather as valuable resources for communication in language learning [15]. In this study, the pictures used during the treatment acted as meaningful stimuli that helped activate students' background knowledge and encouraged them to speak more naturally. By providing a visual context, the pictures helped students construct their spoken responses more easily, while also decreasing the nervousness and hesitation commonly experienced by EFL learners during spontaneous speaking activities.

The findings of this study, which revealed significant improvement in students' speaking performance, are supported by several previous studies on the use of picture-based media in EFL classrooms. The mean gain of 17.78 points and the significance value of .000 obtained in the present research align with the findings of [17] whose one-group pretest-posttest study demonstrated a substantial increase in students' speaking scores after the implementation of picture series. This finding confirms that visual media can effectively encourage speaking production.

Moreover, the statistical significance reported in [19] and [20], both showing $p < 0.05$ in paired sample t-tests, further supports the present study's t-value of -12.323, indicating that the positive impact of picture-based media on speaking performance is consistent across various EFL

settings rather than occurring by chance. In addition, the findings in [14] confirm that visual media contributes to speaking development by reducing learners' anxiety and encouraging more active verbal interaction. This tendency was also evident in the present study through the notable decrease in the Poor category from 50% to 5.6% after the treatment.

The findings are in line with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) introduced by Richards and Rodgers, which emphasize meaningful interaction and authentic contexts in language learning. In this study, picture-based media supported those principles by encouraging students to participate in communicative activities through meaningful responses to visual stimuli. Instead of depending on memorized expressions or prepared dialogues, students were encouraged to produce spontaneous utterances based on the pictures they saw, reflecting communication that occurs in real-life situations.

Although the one-group pretest-posttest design used in this study was effective for examining students' progress within a single group, several limitations should still be considered. Since no control group was included, it is difficult to completely eliminate the influence of external factors such as students' exposure to English outside the classroom, personal motivation, or previous learning experiences. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply a control group or use a quasi-experimental design in order to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of picture-based media in improving spontaneous speaking skills.

Despite the limitations of the study, the findings still offers valuable implications for teaching practice. The increase of 17.78 points in the mean score, supported by the clear movement of students from the Poor category to the Average and Good categories, demonstrates that picture-based media contributed significantly to students' speaking development. Even with a limited duration of treatment and the absence of a control group, the improvement was practically meaningful. For this reason, EFL teachers are encouraged to use picture-based media consistently as part of speaking instruction. Since pictures can be used in printed, digital, or projected forms, this strategy is flexible and suitable for various classroom conditions, including environments with limited access to technology.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The implementation of picture-based media in this study was successfully carried out through structured and engaging speaking activities that effectively stimulated students' spontaneous verbal production. By utilizing single pictures across three topics describing people, describing places, and describing animals, students were encouraged to observe visual stimuli and express their ideas immediately without prior preparation or written notes. The variety of activity formats, ranging from group discussions to individual performances, ensured that all students were actively involved in the speaking process. Despite being conducted within a single treatment session of two lesson periods due to school time constraints, the activities proved sufficient in creating a meaningful and low-anxiety speaking environment that supported spontaneous language production among EFL learners.

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, several suggestions are offered for teachers, students, and future researchers within the EFL context. English teachers are encouraged to apply picture-based media more consistently in speaking classes to promote spontaneous speaking

practice. The practical nature of pictures, whether used in printed, digital, or projected forms, allow this strategy to be implemented in a wider range of classroom settings, even in schools with limited access to technology. To achieve better learning outcomes, teachers should also choose pictures that are meaningful and culturally appropriate for students. Students should actively engage in speaking tasks that involve picture-based media. The visual support provided by pictures can help students practice expressing thoughts directly and naturally. Frequent participation in these activities is expected to strengthen speaking fluency as well as confidence in real-life communication. For future researchers, conducting similar studies with a control group or a quasi-experimental design is recommended to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of picture-based media. Further research may also investigate the implementation of picture-based media in different language skills, educational levels, or learning contexts to expand its pedagogical application. In addition, examining the long-term impact of picture-based media on spontaneous speaking ability beyond a single treatment period would be valuable.

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