International Journal of Social Science And Human Research

ISSN (print): 2644-0679, ISSN (online): 2644-0695

Volume 06 Issue 11 November 2023

DOI: 10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i11-23, Impact factor- 6.686

Page No: 6752-6758

Employing Photovoice in Improving Students' Speaking Skill at a Primary School

Cao Xuan Hieu

Iris School 586, Cach mang thang 8 street, Thai Nguyen city, Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam



ABSTRACT: English language acquisition in general and English speaking skills in particular have always been the central goal of English Language Education. However, it is not always easy to improve students' speaking competences. The purpose of this action research is to help third-graders at Iris School with their speaking abilities in English 3. A total of 90 students in three classes and 2 English language teachers participated in this study. A set of pre-test, mid-test and post-test scores and interview serve as research instruments. The results showed that students were advancing in a class after taking all ways through the photovoice technique in the speaking class. Therefore, it is claimed that the photovoice technique is truly beneficial and effective for improving students' speaking skills.

KEYWORDS: English teaching, photovoice, speaking skill1.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is currently the official language of communication in many nations, and it is widely spoken all over the world as the common language of international trade, business, entertainment and education (Rao, 2019; Wang & Burris, 2019). This is the justification for why English is better than less popular languages. With the fast escalating demands of globalization in many domains, such as the business, the environment, and culture, the standards for English language proficiency in Vietnam have dramatically evolved over the previous 20 years. Dao (2015) stated that English has become a crucial foreign language, particularly for the younger Vietnamese population. In particular, it is covered in practically every school and university's curriculum. To further encourage the study of English and improve the standard of English teaching and learning in Vietnam, the Prime Minister of Vietnam released Decision 1440/QĐ-TTg "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Education System in the Period 2008-2020."

Speaking is one of the most challenging skill for students to master, but it is believed to play vital for in the master of language (Bailey & Nunan, 2005). Many methods have been introduced and applied to improve students' speaking ability, yet they are still not the strong skills of many students in many developing countries including Vietnam. Dao (2015) informed a common concern of his 330 participants in a research into their needs for improving English, detailing that speaking skills are their weakest skills and ought to be enhanced soon.

Photovoice is a suitable method using picures for supporting the process of English speaking teaching and learning. More specifically, photovoice was first developed by Dr. Caroline Wang in the University of Michigan with the aim of empowering members of groups to collaborate with each other to enhance the quality of a group or community through photographic show (Wang & Burris, 1997). This method has been credited with encouraging interactive learning and advancing student's creative thinking (Ferdiansyah, et al., 2020); increasing students' oral skills in an English specialized secondary class (Janu, et al., 2021); and motivating students in online English class (Nugroho & Sakhiyya, 2022). It was anticipated that using this strategy would help pupils perform better orally, suggesting that it should be used more frequently in the classroom.

In the light of the above discussion, the researcher has been inspired and motivated to conduct the research on applying photovoice in teaching speaking with the title of "Employing photovoice in improving students' speaking skill at the primary school". This method has never been applied in the context of grade 3 in Iris School that the researcher chooses, making it worthwhile to carry out an action research to see whether it can address the speaking weaknesses that students are facing. It is hoped that the study will add a different approach into the research of the effectiveness of photovoice method into speaking skill enhancement and might be used as model for further study in the same area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of speaking

Speaking is considered to be among the most important skills in both first and second language which demands a proactive, attentive and effective participation of the people involved because speaking can somehow reveal the thought and personal traits of a person (Nunan, 1991).

According to Siahaan (2008), speaking is a crucial linguistic skill, which includes the ability to produce sounds with meaning and make them understandable to others is what is meant by speaking in terms of effective communication. Therefore, speaking skill is an integrated part of communication skill and needs to serve the purpose of transferring information from the producer to the perceiver.

Similarly, Bailey (2000) and Fulcher (2003) believe that speaking also refers to the use of words in social interactions. This suggests that at least two people are involved in the activity, and that each of them has some sort of objectives or goals for it. In order to participate in this activity, participants must be both listeners and speakers who can respond rapidly to what they hear. Richards and Renandya (2002) emphasizes the importance of micro speaking skills, highlighting that speaking serves various useful functions such as describing things, giving complaint about people's behavior and activities, making polite requests, discussing a topic and persuading others.

These theories point to a connection between speaking and communicating skills, and thus highlight the importance of speaking in real life as well as its master in language acquisition. Speaking is the capacity to use a language well to convey ideas, emotions, and information to and from other communicators. Therefore, the English instructor should encourage students to speak up in class by employing communicative language exercises and interesting media, as well as by giving them opportunities to do so as frequently as is practical.

2.2. The benefits of photovoice

A professor and researcher - Caroline Wang- at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, created photovoice in the early 1990s as a unique method for conducting participatory action research (Wang 1999). Photovoice is a strategy created to enable people of underrepresented groups to collaborate and "identify, represent, and strengthen their community through a specialized photography style" community-based research activities (Wang & Burris 1997).

According to Blackman and Fairei (2011), the activities performed through photovoice—such as taking photos and sharing stories about them—are impactful. If people sense these feelings of empowerment, they may be more motivated to strive for improved living circumstances for themselves and other people in their community. In classroom using Photovoice, students are required to fulfill a range of roles, and thus having chances to improve their micro speaking skills such as giving opinions or asking for something politely (Nugroho & Sakhiyya, 2022). When they act as photographers, who involve in capturing images as evidence, they will be able to speak with their friends about their photo and thus learning some macro speaking skils (Janu, et al., 2021; Nugroho & Sakhiyya, 2022).

Sharing with their view, researchers (Ferdiansyah, et al., 2020; Hidayat, et al., 2019; Janu, et al., 2021; Nugroho & Sakhiyya, 2022) also add that student's speaking includes more details, has higher fluency and can deal with rising situation in speaking tasks more naturally and meaningfully.

It can be concluded that in light of the aforementioned benefits, photovoice needs to be tested out in the classroom. It is hoped that employing this method would improve the oral communication abilities of the students specified in the following chapter, which would lead to an increase in its use in the classroom.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

Participants in this study includes 90 students in grade three at Iris school in the school year of 2021-2022. They are currently learning in a fixed class, hereafter named class 1, 2 and 3. They had a similar starting level with quite low achievements of speaking skills. They participate in speaking lessons using photovoice technique and take pre-test, mid-test and final test during the study process to assess the extent in which this method can be used to improve students' speaking skills. These 90 students are chosen because they are the age group which is not extensively studied using photovoice methods in Vietnam and their speaking skills in English can somehow be easier to be developed.

Participants of the study also include 2 teachers who are in direct charge of class 1 and 2 as above. They are both experienced teachers who are familiar with action research. They will teach class 1 and 2 using photovoice method with the assistance of the researcher and interviews with them will offer some insights into the way to adapt the method to better improve the speaking quality of students.

3.2. Instruments and Data collection

Pre-tests, mid-tests and post-tests were carried out to collect data about the effectiveness of the method. Pre-tests were administered the week before the start of the term to assess student's starting level and decide whether the hypothesis about their

speaking skills are right and what their weaknesses were. Mid-tests were used after students study 8 weeks using the photovoice method to assess their improvement in English speaking skills. Post-tests used at the end of week 15 was carried out to reassess their improvement.

This study also employs semi-structured interview which was carried out to collect the opinions and suggestions of teachers about the effectiveness of the method as well as adjustments to be made to further increase the impacts.

3.3. Data analysis

In this study, both quantitative research and qualitative research are employed in which the mean scores of the pre-tests, midtests and post-tests were calculated in order to of measure the improvement of students through the intervention of photovoice technique. Meanwhile, the recordings in the interview are noted down, transcribed and then analyzed qualitatively.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Results of Pre-test scores

With the aim of answering the research question, before the photovoice was implemented in teaching speaking in the class, all students were asked to sit for an oral pre-test in order to to determine knowledge baseline. Their pre-test scores were collected and analyzed quantitively through statistics in SPSS. Table 1 shows the means score of pre-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Mean scores of pre-tests in Classes 1,2 and 3

Class	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
1	29	1.00	3.00	1.4828	.57450
2	31	1.00	3.00	1.5161	.67680
3	30	1.00	3.00	1.4333	.56832
Total	90	1.00	3.00	1.4774	.6065

Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of pre-test results of Classes 1, 2 and 3. Generally, the overall mean score of 3 Classes was 1.4774 which shows no considerable difference between mean scores of three clsses. In specific, the mean score of Class 2 was the highest with 1.5161, followed closely by the mean of 1.4828 for Class 1 and 1.4333 for Class 3 respectively. The slight change among mean scores could not estimate the differences between classes. In other words, it is found that the students of thress classes achieved almost the same pre-test scores.

In order to claim this finding, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were computed to compare the three classes to test if there are significant differences in the performance of the pre-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3 (Table 2)

Table 2: Multiple comparisons of pre-test results of Classes 1,2, and 3

Band	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.106	2	.053	.142	.868
Within Groups	32.350	87	.372		
Total	32.456	90			

Table 2 shows the multiple comparisons of pre-test results of Classes 1,2 and 3. It can be seen that the probability value (p-value) of pre-test scores in three classes was 0.868 which was higher than the degree of significance 5% (p = 0.05). This means there was no difference between the means in the pre-test scores of three classes.

From the statistical results inTables 1 and 2, it can be drawn the conclusion that there was no difference in pre-test results among three classes before the implementation of the study. In other words, all students in three classes shared the same status at the beginning of the study.

4.2. Results of Mid-test scores

After the 8th week of the photovoice technique coverage throughout the course, students were asked to sit for the oral mid-test in orer to know whether students were advancing in a class. Table 3 indicates the mean scores of mid-test result in Classes 1, 2 and 3.

Table 3: Mean scores of mid-tests in Classes 1, 2 and 3

Class	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
1	29	2.00	3.00	2.5517	.50612
2	31	2.00	4.00	3.1613	.77875
3	30	2.00	4.00	3.1333	.73030
Total	90	2.0	3.66	2.9487	.6717

Table 3 reveals the descriptive statistics of mid-test results in Class 1,2,3. Overall, both Class 2 and Class 3 achieved higher results in mid-test than Class 1. Specifically, In Class 1, the average band score was 2.55 (Std=0.51) with the highest band being 3; while the lowest was 2. In regard to Class 2, the average band of this class was 3.16 (Std=0.78); the highest band was 4 and the lowest band was 2. Taking Class 3 into consideration, the average band of this class was 3.13 (Std=0.73) with the highest band was 4 and the lowest band was 2.

Like pre-test results, one way analysis of variance were also computed to compare the three classes to test if there are significant differences in the performance of the mid-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3 (Table 4)

Table 4: Multiple comparisons of mid-test results in Class 1,2, and 3

(I)	(J)				95% Confidence Interval	
VAR0000 1	VAR0000	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	60957*	.17699	.003		1875
	3	58161*	.17841	.004	-1.0070	1562
2	1	.60957*	.17699	.003	.1875	1.0316
	3	.02796	.17546	.986	3904	.4463
3	1	.58161*	.17841	.004	.1562	1.0070
	2	02796	.17546	.986	4463	.3904

^{*.} The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 presents the multiple comparisons of mid-test results in Class 1,2, and 3. It was obviously seen that after 8 planned lessons, the speaking level of 3 classes revealed certain differences. To be concrete, the result of Class 1 was significantly different from the result of Class 2 and 3 (p = 0.03 and 0.04 < 0.05); while the result of Class 2 and 3 showed considerable difference (p = 0.986 > 0.05).

From the statistical results in Tables 3 and 4, it can be drawn the conclusion that there were significant differences in the performance of the mid-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3 in which the overal mean score of the mid-test increased up to 2.9487 compared to the overal mean score of the pre-test (M=1.4774). This indicates that, students were advancing in a class after taking halfway through the photovoice technique in the speaking class.

4.3. Results of Post-test scores

After the 15th week of the photovoice technique coverage throughout the course, students were asked to sit for an oral post-test in order to determine how much they had progressed after the intervention of the photovoice techniques in the speaking class. Table 5 demonstrates the mean scores of post-test result in Classes 1,2 and 3

Table 5: Mean scores of mid-tests in Classes 1, 2 and 3

Class	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
1	29	2.00	5.00	3.4138	.77998
2	31	3.00	5.00	4.0968	.78972
3	30	3.00	5.00	4.7000	.53498
Total	90	2.67	5.00	4.0702	.70152

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of post-test results in Classes 1, 2 ans 3. Overall, there was a significant difference in the speaking level of students after the study. Specifically, in Class 1, the lowest band was 2 and the highest was 5 with the average band score was 3.41. In Class 2, the average band of this class was 4.1, while the highest band was 5; the lowest was 3. In Class 3, the average band of this class was 4.7 with the lowest band was 3 and the highest band was 5.

Furthermore, one way analysis of variance were also computed to compare the three classes to test if there are significant differences in the performance of the post-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3 (Table 6)

Table 6: Multiple comparisons of post-test results in Class 1,2, and 3

	_	Mean Differenc	e		95% Confidence Interval		
(I)	(J)	(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	2	68298*	.18381	.001	-1.1213	2447	
	3	-1.28621*	.18529	.000	-1.7280	8444	
2	1	.68298*	.18381	.001	.2447	1.1213	
	3	60323*	.18223	.004	-1.0377	1687	
3	1	1.28621*	.18529	.000	.8444	1.7280	
	2	.60323*	.18223	.004	.1687	1.0377	

^{*.} The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 shows the multiple comparisons of post-test results in Classes 1,2, and 3. It is obvious that the post-test results of 3 classes revealed a significant difference with all p values < 0.05 (0.00, 0.01 and 0.04). Put it simpler, the multiple comparison results shoed that considerable differences among three classes existed significantly.

From the statistical results in Tables 5 and 6, it can be drawn the conclusion that there were significant differences in the performance of the post-test in Classes 1, 2 and 3 in which the overal mean score of the post-test increased up to **4.0702**, compared to the overal mean score of the mid-test (M= 2.9487) and the pre-test (M=1.4774). This indicates that, students were advancing in a class after taking all ways through the photovoice technique in the speaking class. In other words, after 15 weeks of the photovoice technique intervention, students in 3 classes achieved certain improvement in their speaking skills.

4.2. Results of Interview

Interviews were carried in a classroom at Iris school and interviewers had contact with interviewees for agreement before they were administered. Subjects of the interview include 2 teachers of class 2 and 3. The aim of the interview session was to collect the teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of this method. The interview was recorded, and the total length of each was around 15 minutes.

Firstly, the teacher was asked about the effectiveness of photovoice technique on the improvement of students' vocabulary for speaking. Two interviewees highlighted that using photovoice technique in the speaking classroom is a good way because students will have more chances to memorize words and enrich their vocabulary. Below are excerpts that illustrate their point/hoặc dùng câu The excerpts below are examples of the statement:

Interviewee 1: I think it's a very good way to improve students' vocabulary for speaking; because students have the chance to memorize words through visual tools.

Interviewee 2: Students can definitely enrich their vocabularies by photovoice.

In the second question, the interviewees were asked about the alterations that should be employed during the photovoice lessons to further enhance students' vocabulary for speaking. The two interviewees agreed that students' own photos should be used rather than provided photos due to the fact that students could collect more new words from various scenes. The following excerpts illustrate their statements

Interviewee 1: well, students' photos should be used in the lessons rather than using provided pictures.; you know, new words will appear in different contexts.

Interviewee 2: I think it should be the pictures taken by them. New things in each picture create a chance for students to get new words.

Regarding the third question, when being questioned about positive effects that photovoice techniques provide with students' pronunciation. The interviewees had the same opinions that photovoice was a highly effective teaching method to develop students' pronunciation, as well as eliminate the shame of students. The excerpts below are examples of the statement

Interviewee 1: it's absolutely good for pronunciation improvement due to the fact that students have to talk and talk; so it clearly reduces their shame to show what they have and teachers have a chance to correct their mistakes.

Interviewee 2: photovoice helps students a lot in improving their pronunciation; I saw students struggling with pronunciation at the beginning of the course, at the end of the term; their pronunciation became much better.

In the fourth question, interviewees were asked about the alterations that should be done in order to further boost students' pronunciation. The help from the teacher was the answer of both interviewees. Below are excerpts that illustrate their point

Interviewee 1: It's definitely the help from teachers.

Interviewee 2: I think the feedback from teachers will help a lot.

In relation to the fifth question, the researcher asked about the effectiveness of the photovoice technique on the improvement of students' interaction. The interviewees indicate that this technique promoted students to talk and interact more in the class. The following excerpts show their points of view.

Interviewee 1: Using students' own materials encourages them to talk more and become more active in the lessons; that is what photovoice brings to the lessons.

Interviewee 2: they talk more and laugh more in the class.

The last question of the interview investigated the opportunities to further increase students' interaction. The interviewee 1 stated that students' own pictures are the promotion for their interactions in the class; while the interviewees 2 pointed that smaller numbers of students in the class would work. Below are the excerpts that demonstrated their opinions.

Interviewee 1: the key point is students' own pictures; they love to share and be proud of their own things.

Interviewee 2: To me, the lesson would go better if there are less students in the class, 15 to 20 students is an ideal number.

In conclusion, the interview with teachers indicates important points for the study in which using photovoice technique in the speaking classroom is a good way because students will have more chances to memorize words, enrich their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation as well. Moreover, this technique provides an effective learning environment for students with significant improvement interaction of students by promoting students to talk and interact more in the class. Therefore, it is concluded that using photovoice technique in the speaking class brings a lot of benefits in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation and interaction.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In light of the necessity for students to have a strong command of the English language in language classrooms, the primary goal of this research was to examine the effectiveness of the photovoice technique on improving students' English speaking skills. The result of the study indicates some certain significant points for the study.

Based on pre-test, mid-test and post-test results, it can be said that there were significant differences between students' pre-test, mid-test and pos-test scores. In particular, before employing he photovoice technique in the classroom, students' speaking skills were not really good enough with the low overal mean score of the pre-test (M=1.4774). However, after taking halfway through the photovoice technique in the speaking class, students' overal mean scores in the mid-test were increased up to 2.9487. More particularly, the overal mean score of the post-test increased up to 4.0702. This indicates that students were advancing in a class after taking 15 weeks of covering the photovoice technique in the speaking class. In other words, using the photovoice technique in the classroom totally helps students enhance their speaking skill interms of vocabulary, pronunciation and interaction.

Based on interview results, it can be concluded that using photovoice technique in the speaking classroom is a good way because students will have more chances to memorize words, enrich their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation as well. Moreover, this technique provides an effective learning environment for students with significant improvement interaction of students by promoting students to talk and interact more in the class.

The findings of the study are in line with the statement of several researchers (Harmer, 2011; Maaly, 2021; Velea & Alexandru 2017) that photovoice had various advantages in term of improving writing and speaking skills as well as motivating creativity. These also matched with the findings of Dale (2015) and Widiadnya (2019) which confirmed that photovoice was a remedy for speaking of students in primary school.

In conclusion, photovoice is not only effective for students but also makes the student interested and motivated in learning speaking. All of the students were able to communicate and cooperate each other in developing their speaking skill; thus, they can improve their vocabulary, pronuncation and interaction. However, despite the short duration of the study and the learning achievement as the primary focus, this study added to future ressearch supporting the benefits of using photocoice technique as the authentic materials in language learning and teaching. It is hopeful that future research can focus on extending the experiment's duration and analyzing other language skills in order to increase among students in different circumstances and capacities.

REFERENCES

- 1) Bailey, K. M., & Nunan, D. (2005). Practical English language teaching: speaking. New York: McGraw-Hill ESL/ELT.
- 2) Brown, H. D. (2004). Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- 3) Burns, A. (2010). Doing action research in English language teaching. New York: Routledge.
- 4) Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2005). Doing action research in your organization (2nd ed). London: Sage publications ltd.
- 5) Dale, E. (2015). Audio Visual Methods in Teaching. New York: Dryden Press.
- 6) Dao, X, V. (2015). Report on standardizing foreign language competences for ESP lecturers. Retrieved 28/4/2015 from: http://tuaf.edu.vn/trungtamngoaingu/baiviet/bao-cao-tham-luan-chuan-hoa-nang-lucngoai-ngu-cho-giang-vien-day-chuyen-nganhbang-tieng-anh-tai-truong-dhnl-5523.html.
- 7) Decision 1440/QĐ-TTg (2008). "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Education System in the Period 2008-2020."
- 8) Ferdiansyah, S., Widodo, H. P., & Elyas, T. (2020). Photovoice in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Writing Classroom: No Need to Rush to Love Writing Because Love Will Grow with Time The Use of Photovoice in Educational Contexts. Journal of Asia TEFL, 17(1), 269-279. 10.18823/asiatefl.2020.17.1.19.269.
- 9) Gardner, H. (1993). Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences. (2nd ed.). New York, Basic books.

- 10) Hidayat, R. A., Rifqi, R., & Sulistianingsih, E. (2019). The Effect of Photovoice on Speaking Skills at the Secondary School Level. Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning, 8(140). 10.21580/vjv8i24075.
- 11) Janu, S., Halim, A., & Zur, S. (2021). Improving Students' Oral Skill Using Photovoice. AL LUGHAWIYAAT. 10.31332/alg.v1i1.1991.
- 12) Maaly, Y. (2021). A Photo for Change: A Mixed Methods Study of Using Photovoice Pedagogy to Foster Transformative Learning Among College Students. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado.
- 13) Nguyen, H. & Nguyen, T. (2007). *Teaching English in Primary Schools in Vietnam: An Overview*. Current Issues in Language Planning, 8(10). 2167/cilp106.0.
- 14) Nugroho, K. Y. & Sakhiyya. Z. (2022). *Photovoice: Young children online English language learning, parents' voices and its implication to educational policy and provision*. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 11(3), 612-622. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i3.35083.
- 15) Nunan, D. (1991). Language Teaching Methodology. A Textbook for Teachers. New York, Pentice Hall Intermediate (UK) Ltd.
- 16) Rao, P. (2019). The role of English as a global language. Research journal of English, 4(1), 65-79. ISSN: 2456-2696
- 17) Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Methodology in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 18) Trinh, N. B., & Pham, T. D. T. (2021). Challenges in Speaking Classrooms among Non-English Majors. Vietnam journal of education, 5(2), 37-42. https://doi.org/10.52296/vje.2021.52
- Velea, S., & Alexandru, M. (2017). PhotoVoice_Connector, 1–17. Retrieved from https://www.erasmusplus.ro/library/files/Ghiduri COnnector 2017/PhotoVoice Connector 2017.pdf
- 20) Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). *Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment.* Health Education and Behaviour, 24 (3), 369-387.
- 21) Widiadnya, I., G., N., B., Y. (2019). *Implementing Photovoice in Teaching Speaking to the Tenth Grade Students of SMA (SLUA) Saraswati 1 Denpasarl*. International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies, 1 (7), 676-680.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.