

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH STORYTELLING
OF NARRATIVE TEXT AT GRADE VIII-A OF SMPN I TEMPULING
INDRAGIRI HILIR**

Lia Diana

ABA Yayasan Pendidikan Persada Bunda

E-mail: liadiana12@gmail.com

Abstract

The study purposed to determine if storytelling technique can improve the students' speaking skill of narrative texts, and the influencing factors of its improvement. It was designed as Classroom Action Research which was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle comprised of five meetings that covered plan, action, observation, and reflection. The research participants were the students of VIII-A SMPN 1 Tempuling Kab. Indragiri Hilir. There were 13 students. The data were collected through (1) observation sheets; students, teacher, teaching steps, (2) field notes, (3) interview, and (4) speaking skill. The research determined that storytelling technique could improve the students' speaking skill of narrative texts. The factors that influenced its improvement were (a) teaching material, (b) students' motivation, (c) classroom activities, and (d) teacher's role.

Keywords : *Speaking skill, Narrative text, Storytelling.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah *storytelling technique* dapat meningkatkan keterampilan siswa dalam berbicara melalui teks *narrative*, serta faktor-faktor apa saja yang mempengaruhi peningkatan keterampilan berbicara tersebut. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Setiap siklus terdiri dari lima kali pertemuan. Masing-masing siklus terdiri dari *plan, action, observation, dan reflection*. Partisipan pada penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII-A SMPN I Tempuling Indragiri Hilir yang berjumlah 13 siswa. Data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui: (1) lembar observasi; siswa, guru, langkah mengajar (2) catatan lapangan (3) wawancara, dan (4) tes berbicara. Peneliti menemukan bahwa penggunaan *storytelling technique* dapat meningkatkan keterampilan siswa dalam berbicara melalui *teks narrative*. Adapun faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi peningkatan keterampilan siswa dalam berbicara melalui teks *narrative* adalah (a) materi, (b) motivasi siswa, (c) aktivitas kelas, dan (d) peran guru .

Kata Kunci: *Keterampilan berbicara, Teks Narrative, Storytelling*

INTRODUCTION

English subject is one of the important subjects taught at Junior High School. English is learned as the first foreign language because English is recognized as the international language. It plays important role in communication both in written and spoken form in the entire world. People in different countries use English as communication tool. Besides, English is also used to exchange information in many aspects such as technology, science, culture, and social. English is taught in four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking skill is important to be taught because it is a way of expressing students' ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally.

In fact, speaking English is not easy for grade VIII of SMPN I Tempuling. This is proven by researcher as a teacher at Junior High School I Tempuling. The students of grade VIII especially class VIII A cannot communicate in English although they have been learning English language from grade four of elementary school. This means that they had learned English for four years when this research was conducted.

Narrative is one of the genre types of curriculum with the basic competency

is to enable the students to retell the story based on the given material or text. Then, the purpose of teaching speaking through telling story activities is to make the students able to use the language communicatively and meaningfully not only paying attention on its language features and generic structure but also using good simple vocabulary, good pronunciation and fluency. In this case, the teacher must strive hard to stimulate students' abilities including their motor skill, intelligence, creativity, strategy, and interest by giving good learning material and designing learning activities which are challenging and push them to practice the language especially in speaking activity.

However, the researcher's students of the second grade especially class VIII-A of SMPN I Tempuling have difficulties in speaking activity, even though they have been given the explicit background knowledge about narrative text. Most of the students said that the biggest problem they got in learning was their fear of exploring English conversation, because they were afraid of making mistake. The lack of practice was also one of the factors causing students to have low ability in speaking. Based on

her experience at SMPN 1 Tempuling, when the researcher as a teacher gave them a test to tell a story, the researcher observed that none of the students could do it well. The fact showed that the students' speaking scores were still very low, the scores were averagely 55 below the standard passing score criteria (KKM), 70. It indicates that the teacher's effort in improving the students' speaking by having a telling story test was not as effective as the teacher expected.

In order to improve students' speaking ability, the teachers need some efforts to motivate students to speak more actively in English. There were some techniques that the teachers can use to improve students' speaking ability. One of the techniques was by using storytelling technique. Storytelling is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific, live audience. In addition, narrative storytelling provides the basic structure of how the students create meaning out of their existence in everyday lives. Moreover, neuroscience is discovering that the brain is wired to organize, retain and access information through story and that every relationship

experience and object is recorded in the mind as a story (Caine et al. 2005).

METHOD

This study is an action research. This is typically a classroom problem solving. Gay and Airisian (2000:593) state that: "Action research is a type of practitioner's practice; action implies doing or changing something. Practitioner research means that the research is done by practitioners about their own practice. Action research is a process in which individual or several teachers collect evidence and make decisions about their own knowledge, performance, and effects in order to understand and improve them"

Based on the statement above the researcher can conclude that classroom action research is one of the ways to solve the teaching problem in a form of action which done in the class. Besides, its function as a problem solving it also functions as an improvement in applying a new technique. In applying this research, the researcher did it in team. She cannot do it individually. In this case, she would be helped by another English teacher called a collaborator.

Moreover, action research is a process in cycle. There are some steps that the researcher should know if they want to conduct the action research. Kemmis and Mc.Taggart (1998:10) state that there are four fundamental aspects of the action research; they are planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this research the researcher planed to conduct one cycle design only. Because of the unsatisfying result, the second cycle will be conducted.

The participants were the researcher, collaborator and 13 students in the class. Almost all of students in

class VIII-A got difficulties in speaking skill of narrative text. Then the researcher thought that it was much better if she helped the students to improve their skill in speaking narrative text through Storytelling. The data in the research were gathered from: (1) observation checklists for students, teacher, and steps of teaching, (2) field notes, (3) interviews, and (4) speaking tests. The writer used scoring rubric for students' speaking modified from Hughes (2003). Hughes proposes five components; Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Fluency, and Comprehension.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are two different kinds of data; quantitative and qualitative data gathered in the research. The findings are important to answer the questions of the research. The quantitative data gathered in the research is aimed to answer whether storytelling technique of narrative text could improve the teaching and learning process in teaching speaking at class VIII-A SMPN I Tempuling Indragiri Hilir. While the qualitative data answered the second question about what factors influence the

improvement of the students' speaking skill in narrative text at class VIII-A SMPN I Tempuling Indragiri Hilir.

1. To which extent could storytelling technique improve the students speaking skill in Narrative text.

After doing the research, the writer found that storytelling technique of narrative text could improve the students' speaking skill in narrative text. During two cycle treatments in 10 meetings, the result showed that the students could speak narrative text better than before the research. It was indicated

from the improvement of mean score of the students' skill in speaking narrative text at the end of cycle two. Moreover, there were also improvements of students' speaking skill for each aspect of speaking narrative text. Finally, the following are the detail explanations about the teaching and learning process and the findings of the research.

a. The First Cycle

The first cycle was done for five meetings from the third of September 2012 until the 24th September twice a week. In this case, the researcher took about an hour to apply the technique of storytelling that focused on the students speaking skill and the rest hour was used for the teaching process as stated in the syllabus.

In this part, the researcher applied her lesson plan to teach the students about speaking skill by storytelling. The collaborator observed the teaching and learning process. Actually, two meetings had to be provided for one lesson plan or for one story with its activity because one meeting was not enough to finish one lesson plan. It means that four meetings consist of two lesson plans and two stories. In each two meetings, the students had to complete all the activities and the task designed based on the given

lesson plan. The task was in the oral form whether they did discussion or asking and answering the related questions to the story either in peer activity or group activity. At the end of the test, the students had to be able to retell the story in front of the class. The test had function to evaluate the students' respond and progress toward the given subject and to give reflection for the researcher to rethink the better progress for the following meeting.

At the end of cycle one, the researcher did the test in oral form by asking the students to retell the story in front of the classroom individually to evaluate the students' achievement and to see whether the researcher had to do revision into the second cycle. Actually the action was done into three steps; pre teaching activity, whilst teaching activity, and post teaching activity that should be focused on the students centered as the purpose of teaching and learning process.

b. Second Cycle

Because of unsatisfied result in the first cycle on the students' improvement on the speaking skill, the researcher and the collaborator continue the research into the second cycle started on October

1st 2012 and ended on October 24th 2012. For this case, the researcher and collaborator though hard how to apply new teaching and learning strategies to make students become more excellent, what material would be given to attract them to involve totally in retelling the story, and what activities had to be designed to ask them to practice speaking English actively.

Different from the condition in the previous cycle, after listening the story the students were quite easy to understand the story plot and they could discuss directly with their friends. In this occasion, the researcher designed new teaching strategy to help the students be able to create their own story by their own words and ways completing the narrative structure of the story and grammatical sentences.

The researcher conducted the test to evaluate the students' improvement on

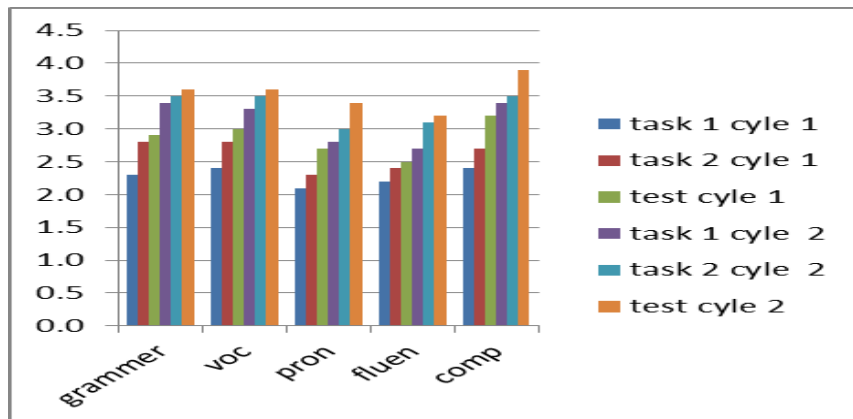
speaking skill on each component to prove whether the students gave dynamic changes. Virtually, the students had been informed a weak before the test, so they studied hard at home to practice their own story. At that time, there were many stories told.,but the stories to be tested had to had to be one of the stories which had been listened by the students in the previous meetings. A few minutes before having the test they were given the chance for preparing their own story in seriously. Then, the researcher evaluated the students' competence one by one in front of the class.

In this case, the students' improvement on speaking indicators from the first cycle to the second cycle could be described from the comparison of students' means of task and test from the beginning of the meeting till the end in the following table and figure:

Table I. The Comparison of Students' Means of Speaking Components in each Task and Test

| Cycle | Evaluation | G | V | P | F | C |
|-----------------|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Cycle I | Task 1 | 2.3 | 2,4 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.4 |
| | Task 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.7 |
| | Test 1 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 3.2 |
| Cycle II | Task 1 | 3.4 | 3.3 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 3.4 |
| | Task 2 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| | Test 2 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.9 |

G = Grammar, V= Vocabulary, P=Pronunciation, F=Fluency, C=Comprehension

Figure I. The comparison of students speaking skill score (Cycle 1 and Cycle2)

The table and the diagram of Students Means of speaking score of each component above shows that the students did the significant changes in their mark. In the first task done in meeting 2, the averages students got low speaking skill in each component as seen from the mean of students' scores in each indicator; 2.3 for grammar, 2.4 for vocabulary, 2.1 for pronunciation, 2.2 for fluency, and 2.4 for comprehension. Then, after revising her teaching ways and activities to implement her technique in the classroom, the students gave a little changed as figure out in the diagram above. At the result of the second task in meeting 4, students scores for speaking component were increased that are 2.8 for grammar, 2.8 for vocabularies, 2.3 for pronunciation, 2.4 for fluency and 2.7 for comprehension. Thus, the students'

improvement was continued in the test for the first cycle at the fifth meeting of the research in which the students' scores were increased and became 2.9 for grammar, 3.0 for vocabulary, 2.7 for pronunciation, 2.5 for fluency, and 3.2 for comprehension.

The significant improvement on the students mean score for each indicator was shown in the second cycle where the students got good mark or very good mark and nobody got poor or failed mark. It was proved from the students' test result at the end of the meeting for the second cycle for the speaking test. Here, the mean score for grammar, vocabularies, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension are increase about 7 point for grammar, 6 point for vocabulary, 7 point for pronunciation and 7 point for fluency and for comprehension from the finding

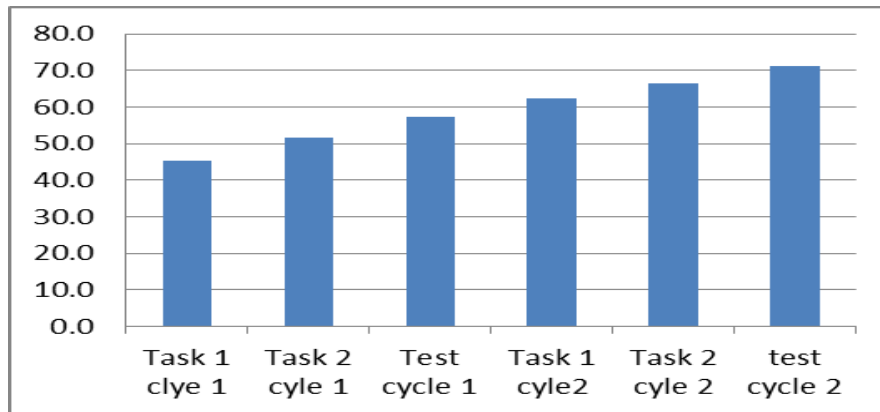
of speaking test in the first cycle. It can be concluded that the students did the improvement of their mark in each cycle on each speaking component. Besides,

the total means of students' speaking competence could be figured out in the following table and diagram:

Table 2. The Comparison of Students' Total Mean of Speaking Skills (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2)

| | Task 1 Cycle 1 | Task 2 Cycle 1 | Test Cycle 1 | Task1 cycle 2 | Task 2 Cycle | Test Cycle 2 |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mean</i> | <i>45.2</i> | <i>51.7</i> | <i>57.2</i> | <i>62.2</i> | <i>66.5</i> | <i>71.1</i> |

Figure 2. The Comparison of Students' Total Mean of Speaking Skills (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2)



The table shows the huge improvement happened in the second cycle, the task in the second meeting shows that the students did the significant improvement on their score. The previous test means from the test of cycle I, that was from 57.2 in the first cycle to 62.2 in the second cycle. Then, mean score of speaking test was also increased steadily in the second task of the second cycle when the students got

66.5 for their total means. Furthermore, the speaking test make the positive effect for the students' competences by which all students could pass the minimum standard for speaking and they had done the important improvement their speaking skill that enabled them to speak better than before. Here, the total of the students' mean score was 71.1 or they got B for their speaking competence. The students make significant improvement on their speaking competence that made the researcher

decide to stop the research in the second cycle because it has been proved from the data.

In conclusion, based on the result of speaking test in cycle I and the test in cycle II, it is known that the students' speaking skill was improved continuously and significantly by implementing storytelling technique. Consequently, storytelling technique is the appropriate technique to be implemented that meant to improve students' speaking skill.

2. The factors influenced the improvement of students' speaking skill

There were many changes done during the research especially on the improvement of students' speaking skill as proven from the comparison of test result in each cycle. Virtually, there were several factors which influence the students' improvement as stated in the observation checklist, field notes, and interview sheets. After having the intensive discussion with the collaborator the researcher decided that the factors which influenced the students' speaking skill improvement is the following:

a. Materials

Based on the interview, the materials had to be provided by the teacher per each meeting of which the purpose to guide or to help the students while doing learning and teaching activities. Here, the material were worksheets that made the students discuss the story content orally in questioning and answering about story, the story script of which the function was to guide the students to comprehend the story from the orientation, complication, and resolution. Vocabularies sheets were meant to help students to create the meaningful sentences for their own story and all of these were related to the content of the story which had been listened by the students per meeting. These materials eased the students to follow the teaching and learning process successfully and inspired them to practice their English. The interview was like the following:

Teacher: *What do you think about the material or worksheet given in the teaching and learning process?*

Student 5: *I think you have designed good material in the second cycle because the material could help me to activate my ability in making and telling the story*

b. Students Motivation

It was found that the students were enthusiastic and interested in teaching and learning process. It indicated that they were motivated through the activities as the result of the technique used.

As a proof, the students could be more active in teaching and learning process. The students' motivation in learning improved from one meeting to the other. The field note results noted that in the first meeting they were still confused of how to apply storytelling activities, but in the meetings they were more enthusiastic in speaking class. It could be seen that they paid attention to the teacher's explanation, responded while being asked, provided their ideas about the topic given, and did retelling narrative text. Those activities happened when they have been motivated and interested in learning process. As a result, because of their high motivation in learning and teaching process, their speaking skill was better.

Additionally, the students' motivation improved because of topic given. Several interview results showed that the students like the topic discussed in the class, which encouraged them to

be more motivated in writing. The results of interview could be seen below:

Researcher : What do you think about the story that is used in this speaking activity?

S4 : I think those stories are interesting and I like them.

Researcher : Why do you like it?

S4 : Because I like fairytale story and it is appropriate to our age

Researcher : Have you heard about the story before or have read the story before?

S4 : Yes Miss, I have heard about the story before so that I have enough background knowledge about the story and it is therefore easy for me to understand the story content.

Researcher : Do you get some difficulties from the story?

S4 : No Miss, because the stories are related to

our material so that we have got enough background knowledge about the story

The results of interview above indicated that the students' speaking skill improve because they were interested in the stories given. When they liked the stories given, they did their best in their speaking. It means that they were encouraged from the storytelling provided.

c. Classroom activity

The interview showed that the teacher had to be creative and active to design classroom activity in which the students could work and practice the language in order to master it well. To make the students be self-confidence in speaking, the teacher designed pair and group work activities that were settled to discuss the story plot and to practice telling story by using their own sentences. Through group work activity, the students had direct learning experience in which they together experience language through telling the story. After listening the story, the teacher made the students discuss the story based on the given worksheets and together they tried to make their own

story dealt with the story that has been listened after getting enough teachers' explanation. Then, they could speak freely without feeling afraid of the teacher's correction directly. Speaking in front of the group could motivate and construct their self confidence before they were challenged to retell the story in front of the class. The results of interview could be seen below:

Researcher: What do you think about Classroom Activities?

Student 1: I like the activity

Researcher: What activity do you like?

Student 1: I like group activity because I can share everything to my friends

d. Teacher's guidance

The field note showed that the researcher had the important role to determine the successful teaching and learning process so that the teacher encouraged the students to study the language by giving better guidance in the classroom. Here, the teacher used guidance and modeling as the teaching approaches for the students in order to make them reach the expected speaking skill. Teacher's guide was required by the students to acquire good understanding in doing the activities through storytelling because it was quite

hard for them to engage with new teaching and learning technique. Firstly, at the beginning of the teaching process, the teacher explained briefly the goal and the basic competence that must be accomplished. Then, the teacher explained the students the way how to understand the story. Continually the teacher explained the way how to make their own story by giving the example on the white board and the students gave positive respond on it. As the result, they could create their own story by using simple sentences. Below is a sample of field note taken:

“The teacher’s modeling and guidance could help the students to understand the story fast and became brave to tell the story in front of the class. The students did many changes on their grammatical use or the language features of the story because they had understood to the needed tenses in retelling the story and they could complete their story and enlarge their vocabulary.....”

CONCLUSION

From the result of the research, it can be concluded that the students’ speaking skill in narrative text at grade

VIII A SMPN I Tempuling is better improved through storytelling. It is proved that story retelling can be used as the media to explore the students’ speaking skill in storytelling activity because it gives the students such a fun learning atmosphere and allows the students to have the language experience. As the result, the students are motivated and stimulated to learn in order to speak English well and they can improve their speaking skill eventually.

Actually, there are four factors that influence the changes of students’ speaking skill in story retelling activity in this research. The factors are material, students’ motivation, classroom activity and teacher’s guidance. For this reason, the researcher became active and creative to find out the appropriate teaching media to solve their students’ problems in their classroom. In this case, the researcher used storytelling activity because it could give them fun learning activity for the students. Besides good material, the researcher designed and prepared classroom activity to activate the students to speak English and to support the students to have learning motivation and interactive speaking opportunity to build their self confidence without anxiety in speaking English.

Then, based on the findings and the discussion of this research, some suggestions can be given as the followings. Firstly, other researchers who have the same problem are suggested to find out the appropriate teaching techniques continually to solve the students' problems in learning and teaching process. Secondly, other researchers as the classroom teachers may give the students enough guidance and be a good model to motivate and to stimulate them to speak actively and to construct their self confidence in practicing English. Thirdly, it is expected that further researcher may conduct action research at different skills and the level of students, at different places and situation by implementing the other techniques that are suitable with their group and their students' need.

REFERENCES

- Barthes, Roland. (1993). *Visual Storytelling and Narrative Structure*. Retrieved on September 10 2011 from <http://inpoint.Org/Visualstorytelling/html>
- Brown, H. Douglas. (1994). *Teaching for Success: A Practical Guide to Learning English*. New York: San Francisco State University.
- Brown, Gillian and George Yule. (1999). *Teaching the Spoken Language*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Caine, R., Caine, G., McClintic, C., & Klimic, K. (2005). *Brain/mind learning principles inaction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Morgan Press.
- Derewianka, Beverly. (1990). *Exploring How Text Work*. Rozella: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Gay, R.L & Airasian. (2000). *Educational Research*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Griffiths. (2008). *Lessons from Good Language Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harris, Davit P. (1979). *Testing English as a Second Language*. New York: Mc. Grow. Hill Publishing Company Limited.
- Harmer, Jeremy. (1998). *How to Teach English*. London: Longman.
- Harriott, W. A. and Martin, S. S. (2004). *Using Culturally Responsive Activities to Promote Social Competence and Classroom Community*. Retrieved on November 15,2011 from <http://inpoint.org/teachingstorytelling/html>
- Heinich, Robert et al. (1989). *Instructional Media and the New Technologies of Instruction*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

- Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for Language Teacher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Istihara, Noriko and Julie C. Chi. (1998). "Authentic in Beginning ESL Classroom; Using a full –Length Feature Film for Listening and Speaking Strategy Practice". Retrieved on September, 13th 2012 from [http// www.Exchanges . State.gov/education/html](http://www.Exchanges.State.gov/education/html).
- Jianjing, Xu. (1991). "Storytelling in the EFL Speaking Classroom". Retrieved on November, 10th from [http// TESL journal/html](http://TESLjournal/html)
- Kayi, Hayriye. (2006). *Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language*. Retrieved on September 21 2011 from [http//TESL journal/html](http://TESLjournal/html)
- Kemmis, Stephen and Robin Mc Taggart. (1998). *The Action Research Planner*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Keraf, Grays. (1997). *Argumentasi dan Narasi*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Klarer, Mario. (2004). *An Introduction to Literary Studies*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Labov, William. (1997). "Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis" Retrieved on August 10th from [http// www.lingupennedu/wlabov/sfs.html](http://www.lingupennedu/wlabov/sfs.html)
- NCLRC. (2003). *Teaching Speaking: Developing Speaking Activities*. Washington, DC: The National.
- Norland, Deborah.L. (2006). *A Kaleidoscope of Models and Strategies for Teaching English to Speakers of other language*. London: Teachers Ideas Press.
- Nunan, David. (1998). *Language Teaching Methodology*. Sydney: Longman.
- (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: MC Graw Hill.
- O'Malley, J Michael. (1996). *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Pardiyono. (2007). *Pasti Bisa: Teaching Genre-Based Writing*. Yogyakarta: CV Ando Offset.
- Rico, Diaz. (2004). *Teaching English Learners: Strategies and Methods*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Shumin, Kang. (1977). *Learning Teaching: Guide Book for English Language Teachers*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy Story". Retrieved on November 12th 2012 from [http//www.books google/books](http://www.books.google/books). Html
- Ur, Penny. (1991). *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wilkins, D.A. (1978). *Linguistic in Language Teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.

Wright, Andrew. (1995). *Storytelling with Children*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Yasin, Anas. (2010). *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Tuntunan Praktis*. Padang: Sukabina Press.

Zainil. (2008). *Actional Functional Model: Classroom Action Research*. Padang: Sukabina Offset.