

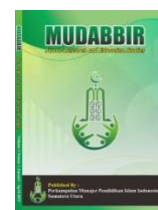


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Student's Perspectives on English Conversation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of task-based learning and technology in improving students' English-speaking skills. A mixed-method approach was employed, involving 120 high school students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group participated in task-based learning enhanced by digital tools, while the control group followed traditional instruction. Data collection included pre- and post-tests, surveys, interviews, and observations. The findings revealed that task-based learning fosters active engagement and practical language use, addressing key challenges in fluency and pronunciation. The incorporation of digital tools provided immediate feedback and personalized practice, significantly enhancing speaking abilities. Additionally, phonological insights and cross-cultural learning experiences contributed to improved pronunciation and global communication skills. This study underscores the importance of an integrated approach combining direct teaching methods, technology, and phonological understanding in developing students' speaking proficiency. These results offer practical implications for curriculum design, emphasizing the need for innovative, student-centered language learning strategies.

Keywords: Task-based learning; English-speaking skills; digital tools; phonological insights; language education.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency in English constitutes a critical component in acquiring a second language, particularly in formal education and global communication contexts. According to Brown (2007) and Richards & Rodgers (2001), mastering spoken English enhances one's ability to interact effectively in diverse environments. However, numerous students face challenges in achieving fluency, often hindered by cultural, psychological, and linguistic barriers (Sahid et al., 2024; Plevka-Jones, 2024). These obstacles manifest in various forms, including a lack of confidence, inadequate vocabulary, and limited exposure to authentic conversational scenarios.

In response to these challenges, educators and researchers have emphasized the integration of technological advancements to address these difficulties. Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) highlighted the role of phonology and sound structure in enhancing language comprehension, while Wani et al. (2023) demonstrated the utility of interactive media in fostering speaking skills, particularly among young learners. The interplay between pedagogy and technology has created opportunities to innovate teaching methodologies, enabling students to develop their conversational competencies more effectively.

Previous studies underscore persistent issues in understanding conversational structures, vocabulary acquisition, and the psychological barriers to speaking English (Ukhrowi, 2024; Zaki & Jaya, 2024). For instance, many students struggle with the pronunciation and recognition of phonemes, which are foundational to effective communication (Indriana Dewi Mawarni Marpaung et al., 2023). Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language learning poses both opportunities and challenges, particularly in fostering engagement and providing personalized feedback (Romadhon, 2024; Li, 2024).

To mitigate these issues, there is a growing emphasis on adopting learner-centered pedagogies and evidence-based strategies. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, combined with psycholinguistic frameworks, offers a robust theoretical foundation for understanding and addressing conversational challenges (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Sahid et al., 2024). These approaches facilitate meaningful

interaction and encourage learners to overcome linguistic apprehensions by emphasizing practical usage over rote memorization.

The Minimal Pairs technique, as explored by Indriana Dewi Mawarni Marpaung et al. (2023), has emerged as an effective method to enhance pronunciation skills by distinguishing similar-sounding phonemes. This technique not only improves phonemic awareness but also aids in vocabulary differentiation and overall pronunciation accuracy. Learners engaging with minimal pairs have reported increased confidence in their spoken English, highlighting its practicality in classroom settings.

Moreover, the application of interactive media, as advocated by Wani et al. (2023), has demonstrated significant potential in engaging young learners. Tools such as animated videos, flashcards, and mobile applications leverage children's curiosity and creativity, fostering an environment conducive to active language learning. This approach aligns with modern pedagogical trends, which emphasize the role of multimedia in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Additionally, experimental studies on teaching strategies, such as the DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) strategy, underscore the value of structured learning activities in enhancing comprehension and speaking skills (Yani Lubis, 2018). The strategy's impact on student achievement highlights its adaptability across diverse learning styles, further underscoring its utility in developing conversational proficiency.

Despite advancements in pedagogy and technology, gaps remain in understanding students' perspectives on conversational challenges and the role of technology in addressing these issues. Existing research primarily focuses on specific strategies like minimal pairs (Marpaung et al., 2023) or media applications (Wani et al., 2023), but lacks a comprehensive exploration of students' attitudes, motivations, and contextual factors influencing their speaking abilities.

Furthermore, while studies like those by Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) delve into phonological structures, their practical application to conversational skills remains underexplored. Similarly, while the DRTA strategy (Yani Lubis, 2018) has proven effective in comprehension, its direct implications for speaking proficiency require further investigation. This research aims to bridge these gaps by integrating

student-centered insights with empirical evidence to propose innovative teaching methodologies.

This study aims to investigate students' perspectives on English conversation, focusing on the factors that influence confidence and willingness to engage in spoken interactions. By exploring the interplay between traditional teaching strategies and technological innovations, this research seeks to identify effective practices for fostering conversational proficiency. The incorporation of psycholinguistic and communicative approaches further ensures a comprehensive understanding of the underlying challenges.

The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus: understanding the psychological and contextual barriers faced by learners while simultaneously evaluating the efficacy of modern tools and techniques. The findings are anticipated to provide actionable insights for educators, enabling them to design interventions that are both effective and learner-centered. The scope of the study encompasses diverse student populations, with particular attention to the integration of phonological and multimedia-based strategies to enhance speaking skills.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating phenomenological qualitative research and quantitative analysis to comprehensively explore students' perspectives on English conversation. The phenomenological approach was chosen to capture the lived experiences of students, emphasizing their subjective realities and insights. This was complemented by quantitative methods to objectively measure improvements in speaking proficiency and confidence.

A total of 120 high school students from diverse educational backgrounds were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure demographic representation. Participants were divided equally into two groups: an experimental group (60 students) and a control group (60 students). The experimental group participated in task-based learning (TBL) activities enhanced by digital tools, while the control group followed traditional teaching methods focusing on grammar and vocabulary.

Several instruments were utilized to gather data:

1. **Questionnaires:** Structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items assessed students' confidence, motivation, and perceived challenges in English conversation.
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants (10 from each group) to gain deeper insights into their experiences.
3. **Speaking Proficiency Tests:** Pre- and post-tests evaluated speaking proficiency, using Harmer's (2007) rubric to assess fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.
4. **Classroom Observations:** Observations documented students' participation and engagement during interventions, using standardized checklists.

Procedure

The study comprised several stages:

1. **Baseline Assessment:** Participants completed a pre-test to establish their initial speaking proficiency and responded to a survey about their attitudes and challenges.
2. **Intervention:** The experimental group engaged in an eight-week program of TBL activities, such as role-plays, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks, supported by digital tools like AI-powered applications and pronunciation apps. These tools offered immediate feedback and personalized learning opportunities. Meanwhile, the control group underwent traditional lecture-based instruction without interactive or technological components.
3. **Post-Intervention Assessment:** Both groups completed a post-test and follow-up survey to measure changes in speaking skills and perspectives. Simultaneously, interviews and observations were conducted for qualitative data collection.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods:

- **Paired t-tests:** Compared pre- and post-test scores to identify significant differences in speaking performance between groups.
- **SPSS Analysis:** Descriptive and inferential statistics uncovered trends and relationships in questionnaire responses.

Qualitative data from interviews and observations underwent thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns that illuminated students' experiences and attitudes.

Ethical protocols were rigorously followed:

- Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from participants and guardians.
- Data were anonymized and securely stored to maintain confidentiality.
- Instruments were piloted with a smaller cohort to ensure clarity and reliability.

To enhance the study's validity and reliability, triangulation was employed, cross-verifying data from questionnaires, interviews, tests, and observations.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The study by Sahid et al. (2024) revealed that most students hold a positive perspective on the importance of English conversation despite facing challenges in vocabulary and grammar. This indicates a need for instructional approaches that focus more on direct conversational practice. Additionally, Romadhon (2024) highlighted the role of technology, such as ChatGPT, in helping students overcome speaking barriers, especially in specific contexts like business communication. These findings emphasize the potential of technology in providing adaptive and personalized language learning support.

Furthermore, research by Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) underscored the significance of phonology in enhancing speaking abilities. Their exploration of sound structures and patterns in language organization provides new insights into addressing pronunciation difficulties. This emphasis on sound structure analysis highlights how a deeper understanding of phonology can be leveraged to improve students' speaking skills effectively.

In comparison to earlier studies, technology-based approaches, as reported by Wani et al. (2023), have also shown the effectiveness of interactive learning media in improving speaking skills, particularly among young learners. Tools such as children's songs, animated videos, and mobile-based applications have proven to foster creativity and boost students' confidence in using English. This aligns with Romadhon (2024), who emphasized the transformative potential of AI in language learning.

Moreover, the minimal pairs technique analyzed by Marpaung et al. (2023) adds a phonological perspective to addressing speaking challenges. This technique aids students in recognizing and accurately producing distinct vowel sounds, thereby

enhancing phonemic awareness and overall speaking proficiency. The integration of phonological methods and technological tools thus provides a holistic approach to overcoming the conversational challenges faced by students.

From a scientific perspective, these findings reaffirm that technology-enhanced learning and phonology-based strategies offer innovative solutions to improve students' speaking skills. Tools like ChatGPT can create supportive and safe conversational environments where students can practice without fear of making mistakes. On the other hand, phonological approaches provide a theoretical basis for improving pronunciation accuracy, which is a critical element of effective communication.

Practically, these findings offer valuable insights for educators in designing relevant instructional programs. For instance, incorporating the minimal pairs technique into classroom activities, as suggested by Marpaung et al. (2023), can help build students' confidence in speaking. Additionally, interactive media identified by Wani et al. (2023) can be used as supportive tools to create engaging and efficient learning experiences.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing the challenges of speaking English. Combining technology, phonological understanding, and practical teaching strategies can significantly impact students' conversational abilities, making them more confident and effective communicators.

DISCUSSION

Classroom environment plays a crucial role in fostering students' willingness to speak in English. According to Ukhrowi (2024), supportive environments, such as discussion groups, significantly enhance students' courage to express themselves verbally. Collaborative learning settings allow students to practice speaking in a less intimidating context, promoting mutual encouragement among peers. This finding aligns with the emphasis on creating interactive and inclusive classroom settings to address the fear of making mistakes.

Burns and Joyce (1997) highlighted the importance of providing immediate and positive feedback to boost students' confidence in speaking. Constructive feedback

helps learners identify their strengths and areas for improvement without undermining their self-esteem. This approach reinforces the notion that errors are a natural part of the learning process and encourages students to participate actively in spoken communication.

Additionally, the analysis by Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) underscores the relevance of phonological studies in identifying challenges associated with sound production and perception. By focusing on the organization and patterns of speech sounds, educators can better understand and address the specific linguistic barriers that students face. This phonological perspective complements efforts to create supportive environments by providing a theoretical framework for effective communication strategies.

The significance of supportive classroom environments aligns with earlier research by Wani et al. (2023), which emphasized the role of interactive media in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Tools such as animated videos and mobile applications not only engage students but also create a simulated environment for practicing conversational skills. These technological tools can complement group discussions by offering additional opportunities for practice and immediate feedback.

The focus on feedback highlighted by Burns and Joyce (1997) resonates with findings by Marpaung et al. (2023), who explored the minimal pairs technique to improve pronunciation skills. The technique involves identifying subtle differences in vowel sounds, which fosters precise articulation and builds learners' confidence. Immediate corrective feedback is critical in this process, ensuring that learners can identify and rectify errors in real-time. Together, these studies emphasize the dual importance of feedback and practice in improving speaking proficiency.

Moreover, the findings of Ukhrowi (2024) parallel insights from Romadhon (2024), who highlighted the potential of AI tools such as ChatGPT in creating personalized and supportive learning environments. These tools allow for individual practice and provide instant, non-judgmental feedback, which can be particularly valuable for students with lower confidence levels. By integrating technology with supportive classroom practices, educators can address a broader spectrum of speaking challenges.

Scientifically, these findings reinforce the value of a multi-faceted approach to improving English-speaking skills. The combination of supportive classroom environments, targeted phonological analysis, and immediate feedback provides a robust framework for addressing linguistic and psychological barriers. Insights from Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) on the impact of sound structure analysis further highlight the importance of integrating linguistic theory into practical teaching strategies.

Practically, these findings have significant implications for curriculum design. Incorporating discussion groups, as suggested by Ukhrowi (2024), encourages active participation and peer-to-peer learning, which are critical for developing speaking skills. Similarly, the emphasis on positive feedback by Burns and Joyce (1997) should be embedded in teacher training programs to equip educators with the skills to provide constructive and confidence-boosting feedback.

Furthermore, the integration of technology, as highlighted by Wani et al. (2023) and Romadhon (2024), presents practical avenues for scaling personalized and engaging learning experiences. By using AI tools and interactive media, educators can supplement traditional teaching methods with innovative approaches that cater to individual student needs.

The findings underscore the necessity of combining supportive classroom practices, effective feedback mechanisms, and technological tools to create a holistic learning environment. This integrated approach not only addresses the immediate challenges faced by students but also equips them with the confidence and skills required for effective communication in diverse contexts.

The integration of digital technology into language education has significantly impacted students' speaking skills. Zaki and Jaya (2024) demonstrated that language learning applications enhance students' mastery of intonation and pronunciation by providing real-time feedback and interactive exercises. These tools facilitate repeated practice, enabling students to refine their speaking skills in a controlled and supportive environment.

Furthermore, Rababah and Rababah (2024) highlighted that technology fosters autonomous learning, allowing students to practice at their own pace. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for addressing individual learning gaps, which are often

challenging to resolve in traditional classroom settings. The use of AI-powered applications further amplifies this benefit, as they can simulate conversational scenarios, providing students with practical speaking opportunities.

Plevka-Jones (2024) emphasized another critical aspect of technology-based learning: its ability to offer cross-cultural experiences. Activities supported by digital platforms enable students to engage with diverse cultural contexts, broadening their horizons and deepening their understanding of language as a tool for global communication. This cross-cultural exposure not only enriches language learning but also nurtures intercultural competence.

The findings from Zaki and Jaya (2024) align with Wani et al. (2023), who demonstrated that interactive media, such as videos and applications, are effective in enhancing speaking skills among younger learners. Both studies underscore the importance of using technology to create engaging and personalized learning experiences that cater to diverse learning needs.

Similarly, the cross-cultural learning opportunities highlighted by Plevka-Jones (2024) resonate with insights from Romadhon (2024), who explored the role of AI in language learning. AI-powered tools, such as ChatGPT, not only enhance linguistic competence but also expose students to various conversational styles and cultural nuances. These tools bridge the gap between language theory and practical communication, making learning more relevant and comprehensive.

The emphasis on pronunciation and phonological understanding in studies by Zaki and Jaya (2024) also complements the findings of Marpaung et al. (2023), who utilized the minimal pairs technique to improve phonemic awareness. Both approaches highlight the critical role of precise articulation in developing effective speaking skills. While Zaki and Jaya focused on technological interventions, Marpaung's work underscores the importance of combining traditional and modern techniques for optimal results.

Scientifically, these findings validate the transformative potential of technology in language education. They demonstrate that digital tools not only enhance specific linguistic skills, such as pronunciation and intonation, but also contribute to a broader understanding of language as a cultural and communicative medium. Insights from Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023) on the significance of sound structure analysis

further highlight the interplay between phonology and technology, reinforcing the importance of a structured approach to language learning.

Practically, the implications for educators and policymakers are profound. The ability of digital tools to provide real-time feedback, as noted by Zaki and Jaya (2024), should encourage the integration of these tools into mainstream curricula. Language learning applications can complement classroom instruction by offering students additional practice opportunities outside the traditional learning environment.

Moreover, the cross-cultural experiences facilitated by technology, as discussed by Plevka-Jones (2024), present a unique opportunity for global engagement. Educators can design curricula that incorporate technology-mediated intercultural exchanges, fostering not only linguistic proficiency but also global citizenship skills.

In conclusion, the integration of technology in language learning offers a multi-dimensional approach to improving speaking skills. By combining phonological insights, interactive media, and cross-cultural learning opportunities, educators can create an enriched learning environment that addresses the complexities of language acquisition while preparing students for global communication.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of adopting an integrated approach that combines direct teaching methods with technological tools to enhance students' speaking skills. Harmer (2007) and Nunan (1999) emphasize the effectiveness of task-based learning (TBL) in addressing deficiencies in speaking abilities. This approach encourages students to engage in meaningful communication tasks, promoting active participation and practical application of linguistic knowledge.

Additionally, phonological research, as highlighted by Puspita Naurah Maharani et al. (2023), plays a vital role in understanding and addressing speech production challenges. Their exploration of sound structures and patterns provides educators with the necessary tools to design targeted interventions for improving pronunciation and articulation. By focusing on phonological intricacies, educators can better equip students to overcome specific linguistic barriers.

Moreover, studies such as those by Wani et al. (2023) demonstrate that the integration of interactive learning media, such as applications and videos, supports the development of speaking skills. These tools enable learners to practice in simulated

environments, fostering creativity and increasing their confidence to express themselves in English.

The role of task-based learning (TBL) as recommended by Harmer (2007) and Nunan (1999) is supported by similar findings in the field. For instance, Romadhon (2024) highlighted the efficacy of AI-powered tools, such as ChatGPT, in facilitating meaningful communication tasks. These tools provide learners with immediate feedback and allow for the practical application of conversational skills in real-world scenarios, reinforcing the principles of TBL.

Furthermore, the importance of phonological understanding in language learning aligns with findings from Marpaung et al. (2023). Their use of the minimal pairs technique emphasizes the role of precise articulation in developing effective communication skills. When combined with the phonological insights provided by Maharani et al. (2023), these studies illustrate the necessity of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical applications to address students' pronunciation challenges.

The integration of technology in language learning, as discussed by Wani et al. (2023), complements the task-based approaches advocated by Harmer (2007) and Nunan (1999). Both approaches emphasize creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences that prioritize active student participation. By combining these methodologies, educators can foster a more comprehensive learning environment that supports both linguistic proficiency and practical communication skills.

Scientifically, these findings provide robust evidence for the effectiveness of combining direct teaching methods with technological tools in enhancing speaking skills. The principles of task-based learning, supported by phonological research, offer a theoretical foundation for designing integrated learning approaches. Maharani et al. (2023) further highlight the value of sound structure analysis in understanding the intricate relationship between language and communication. This scientific insight underpins the development of pedagogical strategies that are both evidence-based and impactful.

Practically, the findings call for a shift in curriculum design to incorporate a blended approach. The integration of TBL, as advocated by Harmer (2007) and Nunan (1999), should be complemented by the use of digital tools that enable interactive and personalized learning experiences. For instance, applications and AI-powered tools can

supplement classroom instruction, providing learners with opportunities for independent practice and immediate feedback.

Additionally, incorporating phonological training into the curriculum can help address pronunciation and articulation challenges more effectively. Educators should be equipped with resources and training to utilize methods such as the minimal pairs technique, as suggested by Marpaung et al. (2023), to enhance students' phonemic awareness.

In conclusion, the findings emphasize the need for an integrated and multidimensional approach to language teaching. By combining task-based methodologies, technological tools, and phonological insights, educators can create a holistic learning environment that addresses the complexities of language acquisition and prepares students for effective communication in diverse contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of integrating task-based learning with technological tools to enhance students' English-speaking skills. Task-based learning promotes active engagement and practical use of language, addressing key challenges such as fluency and pronunciation. The incorporation of digital tools, including AI-powered applications, provides immediate feedback and personalized practice, significantly improving students' speaking abilities.

The role of phonological understanding is equally crucial, as it aids in addressing pronunciation difficulties by focusing on sound structures and patterns. This integration of theoretical insights with practical applications creates a comprehensive framework for effective language teaching. Moreover, the inclusion of cross-cultural learning experiences through technology enriches language acquisition and fosters global competence.

These findings highlight the need for curriculum designs that blend direct teaching methods, technological innovation, and phonological training to prepare students for real-world communication. While this study focuses on high school learners and specific tools, further research could explore a wider range of learners and emerging technologies to broaden its applicability. Overall, this research provides

valuable insights for educators to develop effective, engaging, and adaptive language-learning environments.

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