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Empowering Students' Speaking Ability by Technology Utilization

Veni Nella Syahputri[1]; Lilik Yulianingsih[2]
[1] *Universitas Teuku Umar, Indonesia*
[2] *Politeknik Pelayaran Sorong*
[1] *Email Korespondensi: venninellasyahputri@utu.ac.id*

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Abstract

The increasing importance of English communication in today's globalized world necessitates effective language learning strategies, especially in speaking. However, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students and build their confidence in speaking. This study explores the role of technology in improving students' speaking skills in English language learning, focusing on tools such as speech recognition software, language exchange platforms, and interactive video conferencing. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study involved 120 undergraduate students in a quasi-experimental design with a control and an experimental group. The experimental group utilized digital tools for speaking practice, while the control group received traditional instruction. The results indicated significant improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking confidence in the experimental group. Survey and observational data also showed higher levels of student engagement and motivation. The study concludes that integrating technology into English language teaching can effectively enhance speaking skills by providing immersive, interactive learning experiences that foster autonomy and confidence. These findings highlight the potential of technology to bridge gaps in traditional language learning approaches.

Keywords: *Technology Integration, Speaking Skills, Language Learning, Speech Recognition, Language Exchange.*

Kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris menjadi keterampilan yang sangat penting di dunia global saat ini, terutama dalam keterampilan berbicara. Namun, metode pengajaran tradisional sering kali gagal untuk melibatkan siswa dan membangun kepercayaan diri mereka dalam berbicara. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran teknologi dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, dengan fokus pada alat-alat seperti perangkat lunak pengenalan suara, platform pertukaran bahasa, dan konferensi video interaktif. Menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, penelitian ini melibatkan 120 mahasiswa sarjana dengan desain kuasi-eksperimental yang terdiri dari kelompok kontrol dan kelompok eksperimen. Kelompok eksperimen menggunakan alat digital untuk latihan berbicara, sementara kelompok kontrol menerima instruksi tradisional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kelancaran, pengucapan, dan kepercayaan diri berbicara pada kelompok eksperimen. Data survei dan observasi juga menunjukkan tingkat keterlibatan dan motivasi siswa yang lebih tinggi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi teknologi dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris dapat secara efektif meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dengan menyediakan pengalaman

belajar yang imersif dan interaktif yang mendorong otonomi dan kepercayaan diri. Temuan ini menyoroti potensi teknologi untuk mengatasi kekurangan dalam pendekatan pembelajaran bahasa tradisional.

Kata Kunci : *Integrasi Teknologi, Keterampilan Berbicara, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Pengenalan Suara, Pertukaran Bahasa.*

A. Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a very important skill for students. Speaking, as one of the core language skills, is often considered the most challenging aspect of language learning, especially for students who are in a non-native English speaking environment. Despite its importance, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students and foster confidence in speaking English. As a result, students often struggle to communicate effectively, leading to frustration and reduced language acquisition (Smith & Lee, 2023). This gap underscores the need for innovative pedagogical approaches, particularly technology integration, to improve students' speaking.

Technology integration in language learning has been identified as a powerful tool to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills. By utilizing digital tools such as language learning apps, virtual reality (VR), and online speaking platforms, students can practice speaking in a more engaging and immersive environment (Johnson, 2024). Research has shown that technology not only improves students' language skills, but also fosters motivation and confidence (Anderson & Taylor, 2022). In addition, the widespread use of technology in tele-education has made it possible for students to practice their language skills online.

This study aims to explore how the use of technology can empower students' speaking skills in English language learning. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the effectiveness of various technological devices, such as speech recognition software, language exchange platforms, and interactive video conferencing, in improving students' speaking skills. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educators and institutions about the benefits of technology-enhanced language learning and to provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating technology into English language teaching (ELT) programs.

This study will focus on addressing the gap in the existing literature regarding the implementation of contemporary technological devices in the classroom. While previous studies have explored the impact of technology on language learning in general (Kumar & Singh, 2022), fewer have investigated its direct effects on speaking proficiency. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing insights into how technology can specifically improve students' speaking skills and offer new pathways for language learning.

B. Metode

This study used a mixed methods approach to explore the impact of technology utilization on improving students' speaking ability. The study was conducted at a university in a non-native English-speaking country, involving 120 undergraduate students enrolled in an English language course. The study followed a quasi-experimental design, consisting of a control group and an experimental group, each consisting of 60 students.

Participants

The participants were selected based on purposive sampling. The control group received traditional classroom instruction, while the experimental group was provided with access to various technology tools designed to enhance speaking skills. These tools included speech recognition software, virtual language exchange platforms, and interactive video-based learning applications.

Research Instruments and Materials

To assess the effectiveness of technology in improving speaking skills, data were collected using three primary instruments:

1. Pre-test and post-test speaking assessments: These tests, consisting of spontaneous speaking tasks (e.g., describing images, expressing opinions), were designed to measure improvements in fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. The tests were graded by two independent raters using a 5-point scale.
2. Student surveys: Surveys were administered to gather qualitative data regarding students' attitudes towards technology-enhanced learning and their confidence in speaking English.
3. Observation notes: During each session, researchers made observational notes on students' engagement levels and their interactions with the technology tools.

Procedure

The intervention for the experimental group lasted for eight weeks. During this period, students used technology tools such as speech recognition software (e.g., Google Speech-to-Text) and virtual platforms (e.g., Tandem, HelloTalk) to practice speaking outside of regular class hours. The control group, on the other hand, continued with conventional face-to-face speaking practice activities without the use of digital tools.

The data collection was conducted at three stages:

1) a baseline pre-test before the intervention,
2) a post-test conducted at the end of the intervention period, and
3) a follow-up survey to gather participant feedback on their experiences and perceived improvements.

DataAnalysis

Quantitative data from the pre- and post-test assessments were analyzed using

paired sample t-tests to compare the improvements in speaking ability between the two groups. Qualitative data from surveys and observational notes were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and insights regarding students' perceptions and engagement with the technology tools.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the study revealed significant improvements in the speaking abilities of the experimental group, which utilized technology-enhanced learning tools compared to the control group, which followed traditional methods. Data analysis from the pre-test and post-test assessments showed a noticeable difference in the speaking performance of students in both groups.

1. Speaking Test Performance
   The experimental group demonstrated an average improvement of 25% in their speaking proficiency from the pre-test to the post-test, while the control group showed a smaller improvement of 12%. The improvements in the experimental group were statistically significant, as determined by the paired sample t-test ($t = 4.32$, $p < 0.05$). The experimental group exhibited stronger gains in fluency and pronunciation, as well as a more confident speaking style.
2. Survey Results
   A post-intervention survey was administered to evaluate the students' perceptions of the technology tools used in the study. The majority of students (85%) in the experimental group reported a positive experience with the digital tools, citing increased confidence in speaking English. Notably, 78% of students mentioned that the speech recognition software helped them identify and correct pronunciation errors, while 72% appreciated the interaction with native speakers through virtual language exchange platforms.
3. Engagement and Interaction
   Observational notes indicated that students in the experimental group were highly engaged during technology-enhanced speaking sessions. In contrast, the control group showed lower levels of active participation during traditional speaking activities. The experimental group members often engaged in more frequent speaking practice outside the classroom, utilizing the virtual platforms to interact with English speakers and receive immediate feedback.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that technology-enhanced language learning can significantly improve students' speaking abilities. The positive results observed in the experimental group align with previous research that has highlighted the effectiveness of technological tools, such as speech recognition software and language exchange platforms, in promoting language proficiency (Anderson & Taylor, 2022; Kumar & Singh, 2023).

1. Impact of Technology on Fluency and Pronunciation
   The substantial improvement in fluency and pronunciation in the experimental group can be attributed to the interactive and immersive nature of the technology tools used. Speech recognition software, which provides real-time feedback, allowed students to practice pronunciation and receive corrective guidance, which is often lacking in traditional classroom settings (Zhang & Liu, 2024). Additionally, virtual language exchange platforms facilitated authentic interactions with native speakers, providing students with opportunities to practice speaking in real-life contexts and enhancing their confidence.
2. Engagement and Motivation
   One of the key findings of this study is the higher level of engagement and motivation among students in the experimental group. Research has consistently shown that technology can increase student motivation by making learning more interactive and engaging (Kumar & Singh, 2023). The ability to practice speaking outside of the classroom at their own pace and convenience allowed students to take ownership of their learning process. This aligns with findings by Zhang & Liu (2024), who noted that technology can foster learner autonomy by providing students with flexible learning opportunities.
3. Perceived Confidence and Autonomy
   The positive feedback from students in the experimental group about their increased confidence and autonomy in using technology for speaking practice is consistent with previous studies (Anderson & Taylor, 2022). Many students reported feeling more confident in their speaking ability after using the technology tools, which is a crucial factor in language learning. The ability to engage in real-time conversations with native speakers through language exchange platforms was particularly valuable in building both linguistic skills and social interaction competencies.
4. Limitations and Future Research
   While the study demonstrates the effectiveness of technology in enhancing speaking abilities, it is important to note a few limitations. The study was conducted in a controlled university setting with a specific group of students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include a broader range of participants, including students from various proficiency levels, and explore other technological tools such as gamified language learning platforms or augmented reality (AR) applications. Additionally, the long-term impact of technology on speaking skills could be explored by conducting follow-up assessments several months after the intervention.

Conclusion of Discussion

In conclusion, the use of technology, such as speech recognition software and virtual language exchange platforms, significantly enhances students' speaking abilities by increasing their engagement, providing immediate feedback, and boosting their confidence. The results of this study highlight the importance of

integrating technology into language learning environments to offer more personalized and effective learning experiences. Educators should consider incorporating these digital tools into their teaching practices to create a more dynamic and interactive language learning environment, thus empowering students to develop their speaking skills more effectively.

D. Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that the integration of technology into language learning has a significant positive impact on students' speaking abilities. The use of tools like speech recognition software, virtual language exchange platforms, and interactive video conferencing not only improves fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation but also enhances students' engagement, motivation, and confidence. These technological tools allow students to practice speaking in an immersive, interactive environment that fosters real-life communication, ultimately leading to better speaking proficiency.

Moreover, the study highlights the potential of technology to address traditional challenges in language education, such as limited speaking practice opportunities and a lack of immediate feedback. By enabling students to practice speaking outside the classroom, technology helps build autonomy, providing learners with flexible, self-directed learning opportunities that enhance their skills and boost confidence.

As educators look for more effective ways to improve students' speaking abilities, this study serves as evidence that technology can offer significant benefits. Future research should continue to explore the long-term effects of technology on speaking skills, considering a wider range of students and tools, and addressing the barriers to technology access in diverse educational settings. Educators should consider the integration of these digital tools into their teaching methods to create a more dynamic, engaging, and student-centered learning environment.

This study affirms that technology is not just a supplementary tool, but an essential component for empowering students' speaking abilities in English language learning, offering them the resources they need to develop their language proficiency in an ever-evolving world.

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