

The influence of english learning platform on the improvement of cadets' speaking skill

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Abstract This research seeks to evaluate the powerfulness of the website www.englishspeak.com in enhancing the speaking skills of fourth semester cadets in Marine Mechanical Engineering Technology (TRPK) Batch 59. The research employs an experimental design featuring a pre-test and post-test format implemented for both control and experimental groups. The subjects are fourth semester cadets from the TRPK Department at Politeknik Bumi Akpelni. The sample consists of class TRPK A acting as the experimental group and class TRPK B as the control group, with both classes containing 39 cadets. The process consists of an initial meeting: a pre-test given to both groups, the second and third meetings: the experimental group undergoes treatment using www.englishspeak.com, while the control group learns via conventional methods, and the last meeting: a post-test is executed for both groups. Cadets are required to engage in basic discussions to the topic being explored. The evaluation of their speaking abilities is based on five components: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, content, and fluency. The results of this research indicate the average pre-test scores: experimental group: 44.20; control group: 46.46 and the average post- test scores: experimental group: 61.03; control group: 50.26. The group that was tested demonstrated progress in all five areas of speaking after using www.englishspeak.com. A t-test was performed to evaluate the significance of the outcomes. The t-value was 2.78, surpassing the t-table value of 1.67. This shows a significant difference in the post-test outcomes between the experimental group and the control group. The website www.englishspeak.com greatly enhanced the speaking skills of the cadets regarding pronunciation, sentence formation, vocabulary, substance, and speaking speed. This research shows that using interactive online learning such as www.englishspeak.com can be powerful for teaching speaking.

Keywords: Speaking Skill, Practice, www.englishspeak.com, Learning Website

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English is essential for increasing job prospects, particularly globally, and facilitates working in foreign countries. Nonetheless, this is not true for numerous graduates from maritime academies in Indonesia, who are thought to comprehend English only in a passive manner. For instance, even when they want to introduce themselves, they must study English for a minimum of three years. There are indeed explanations for this problem. A significant issue is that the cadets struggle with speaking English. This is fairly typical as English is a second language, and vocational school cadets in Indonesia typically do not use it in their everyday lives. Mehdi-pour, M and Zarehkafi H. (2013) state that a major obstacle for language learners is achieving fluency and accuracy in speaking. This is due to the fact that to excel in speaking skills, cadets must simultaneously think and speak.

Cadets can improve their speaking skills through different techniques, including practicing with fellow students, listening to English songs, watching English movies, and chatting with native speakers. Although numerous techniques exist, the key aspect is the inner determination and effort that drive them. Drawing from the theories and studies referenced, I will examine the difficulties faced by 4th semester cadets at Politeknik Bumi Akpelni and utilize the website www.englishspeak.com to assist them in enhancing their speaking skills. The key element in addressing any issue is comprehending the problem and discovering a resolution. This research not only examines the speaking difficulties encountered by cadets but also aims to assist them in overcoming these obstacles. Speaking plays a vital role in communication, but it is frequently the most misunderstood of the four language abilities. Consequently, I intend to introduce an innovative method for teaching speaking in the curriculum, using the website www.englishspeak.com as a learning resource. This is important because speaking is an essential skill in acquiring a language.

The cadets sometimes feel nervous when they have to speak. With this site, they can hear how native speakers talk first, and then they can practice on their own whenever they want, without feeling as stressed. Using a modern teaching approach can inspire the cadets and help them feel more motivated to improve their speaking abilities. In practical application, the resources available on the www.englishspeak.com learning site can be utilized by English teachers as an additional method to instruct speaking, particularly for the phrases that are most frequently used. This makes learning English more engaging and thrilling for the cadets.

Afwan (2012) carried out a research study titled “Using Talking Points from www.elllo.org to Enhance Students’ Understanding of English Monologue” that explored how audio-visual tools can help students improve their listening skills, unlike conventional teaching approaches employed by teachers. The research sought to identify the positive and negative aspects of the website and its potential to aid the students in comprehending English monologues more effectively.

In comparison to the previous studies analysed, the speaking practice through the www.englishspeak.com learning website, accessible online, resembles other forms of media. Nonetheless, the learning activities are not exclusively conducted online; at times, they can occur offline as well. Afwan utilized digital platforms to assist students in enhancing their abilities in a particular aspect of English skills. In the same way, my research utilized audio and visual resources to instruct cadets in a specific English skill, mirroring Afwan's method.

To enhance your English speaking abilities, there are a few essential aspects to keep in mind. To become a skilled speaker, you must initially focus on listening to English effectively, as a good speaker is also an attentive listener. Pronunciation is crucial, and if you have difficulty speaking fluently, it could be due to incorrectly pronouncing words. Practicing speaking regularly is crucial because the more you engage in conversation, the more your pronunciation will naturally enhance.

Experts have suggested different types of speaking activities. Brown (2001) listed six kinds of speaking activities that take place in the classroom. Those activities are:

a. Imitative

One form of it is imitative speaking. An instructor ought to incorporate drilling as a regular component of the communicative language classroom. Drills assist the cadets in hearing and repeating specific words or phrases that may be challenging to pronounce accurately due to sounds or grammar rules. This type of exercise helps the cadets practice correct speech and pronunciation of words.

b. Intensive

Intensive speaking is more than just copying. It involves any kind of speaking activity that is meant to help practice specific parts of language, like sounds or sentence structures. In my view, intensive speaking refers to developing good speaking skills, including clear pronunciation and correct grammar.

c. Responsive

A lot of what the cadets say in class is in response to something. It's usually short answers to questions or comments that the teacher or another cadet asks. This type of speaking isn't a back-and-forth conversation.

The following explanation will detail the five aspects of speaking:

a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation denotes the manner in which a word is articulated. The manner in which we pronounce a word during conversations with others can indeed alter the meaning of that word. According to Dickerson, W. B. (2015), “Pronunciation is more than just clearly saying each vowel and consonant sound, but also includes other aspects of spoken language like how fast we speak, the tone we use, where we pause, how we raise or lower our voice, and even how we use our whole body to help communicate spoken messages.”

b. Grammar

There is a big difference in the grammar rules between Bahasa Indonesia and English. Sometimes, this difference causes people to communicate in a way that doesn't make sense because

they don't follow the correct grammar. In this study, I look at the grammar rules that are commonly used in everyday conversations that happen between people.

c. Vocabulary

Vocabulary includes all the words that are part of a language. When we put together words to form a sentence, those words are part of our vocabulary. Learners aiming for success in language acquisition should concentrate on grasping and applying vocabulary correctly. They should be able to use the words in the correct situations.

d. Fluency

Gordon and Darcy (2016) say that fluency is when speakers use a language quickly and confidently, with not many pauses, false starts, or times when they hesitate or search for words. For most English learners, speaking English fluently is a key goal. Fluency means being able to express ideas without stopping too much to think. It is important because without fluency, communication can be less clear and harder to understand.

e. Content

It's very important for the message in what people say to be clear. When someone speaks, others can understand what they mean if their words are clear and easy to follow. That's why speakers should talk about the subject that is being discussed, so their message is clear and makes sense to the listener.

f. Instructing Oral Communication

Instructing Oral Communication is a demanding task for an educator. To meet the study's goal of improving cadets' speaking skills, the lecturer must create a warm and welcoming environment that encourages cadets to engage in conversation. The lecturer's input in class is very important because all the cadets should be paying attention to the lecturer's explanations during the lesson. The English lecturer needs to speak clearly so that cadets can easily follow the example set by the lecturer.

In situations where cadets are learning a second language, especially in a multilingual classroom, it's better to avoid letting the class use too much of their native language. To help cadets improve their speaking skills, English should be the only language used during class lessons. If cadets feel forced to use their first language, it should still be used only when necessary.

a. Learning Media

Firmadani, F. (2020) defines media as the primary channels for delivering messages to broad audiences, particularly through television, radio, and print media. Medium denotes (1) a method through which something is conveyed or depicted, (2) a material or context where something happens, operates, or is transmitted, (3) an individual asserting the ability to engage with the spirits of the deceased, (4) the intermediary quality, extent, etc., that exists between two extremes.

b. Website

Nowadays, individuals are quite accustomed to the internet. Many individuals own their personal devices, often multiple ones acquired from various sources to maintain constant online connectivity. However, I think many people do not completely understand the difference between the internet and a website. Before delving deeper into websites, I will give a short summary of their background. A website is fundamentally a set of interconnected pages on the World Wide Web that operate as one unit. Typically, it is created and overseen by an individual or a team, concentrating on one subject or a small number of related subjects. In scientific terms, a website is regarded as a collection of interconnected web pages, typically featuring a homepage.

Typically, these pages reside on the same server and are managed and updated by an individual, a group, or an entity.

1. Learning website

The learning website www.englishspeak.com is a free, award-winning platform designed for studying English. It provides lessons centered on pronunciation and daily English usage. The website offers extensive audio content with over 100 lessons available. Users have the option to play each item at a standard speed or at a reduced pace. The site provides numerous advantages for those learning English. This consists of plenty of audio resources, the ability to play at regular or reduced

speed, and tools that assist with pronunciation evaluation, vocabulary definitions, and translations. It additionally features 2500 frequently used words and expressions. The site is entirely free to access.



Figure 1. Homepage of www.englishspeak.com Educational Site



Figure 2 English Courses on www.englishspeak.com Learning Site

METHODS

Arikunto (2006: 84) states that the aim of experimental research is to examine if there is an action taken regarding the focus of the study. In other words, experimental research seeks to examine the relationship of cause and effect between two occurrences.

This research employs experimental design. The experiment's design can be outlined as follows:

E	0 ₁	X	0 ₂
C			
	0 ₃		0 ₄

(Arikunto, 2002: 79) Where:

E : Group under experimentation

C : Reference group

X : intervention for the test group (utilization of the www.englishspeak.com learning platform)

- 01 : initial assessment for test group
- 02 : post-examination for the experimental
- group 03 : control group pre-test
- 04 : control group post-test

I decided to use experimental research as the way to set up my study so I can gather the necessary data and information. Before I move on to setting up the research, it's important to understand what experimental research means.

Before starting the research, I use a list of questions from Creswell (2009: 155) to help design the experimental steps. The questions are:

- a. Who is taking part in the study?
- b. Which group will the results from the participants be used for?
- c. How were the people in the study selected? Was it done randomly?
- d. How many people will be in the group that gets the treatment and how many in the group that doesn't?
- e. What is the main thing the study is looking at? How will they measure it? Will they check it before and after the study?
- f. What is the treatment or treatments being given? How is the treatment arranged?
- g. What type of experiment will be used? What would a picture of this setup look like?
- h. What tools or ways will be used to measure the results of the study?
- i. Why was this tool selected?
- j. Who created this tool?
- k. What are the steps in the process? For example, putting people into groups randomly, getting their background info, giving a test before the study, giving the treatment, and then testing again after.
- l. What kind of math or methods will be used to look at the data? Like describing the data and making guesses or predictions from it.
- m. How will the results be explained?

The questions outlined by Creswell above can assist in steering this research. In this research, I separated the participants into two categories: one category utilized the website www.englishspeak.com to enhance their speaking abilities, while the other category received instruction through conventional techniques. Both groups underwent a test prior to the commencement of teaching to assess their knowledge level. Following the instruction, each group completed an additional test. The findings indicated that the group utilizing the website demonstrated greater enhancement in their speaking abilities than the other group.

Arikunto (2006: 127) states that "population refers to the defined limits that determine who is part of or left out of the group." The population can consist of all individuals of a specific category or a smaller segment of that group. The elements in the population are analyzed, examined in detail, and determinations are reached. These findings are subsequently regarded as applicable to the entire population. Arikunto (2006: 174) states that a sample is a segment or representative of the primary group under investigation. In this research, I utilized a random sample to ensure that each subject has an equal opportunity of being chosen. The sample consisted of every cadet in the fourth semester of Marine Mechanical Engineering Technology at Politeknik Bumi Akpelni. The experimental group consisted of TRPK A class, while TRPK B class served as the control group.

Hatch and Brown (2011:28) talk about four ways to get data: observation, questionnaire, interview, and test. To get the data I needed, I used an oral pre-test and post-test as my tool for collecting information. The results from these tests were checked using a rubric, as Brown suggested. Arikunto (2006: 193) says that a test includes questions or tasks made to check someone's or a group's skills, knowledge, intelligence, abilities, or talents. In addition to looking at the right research plan, I also thought about the approach I used during the treatment before doing the test to get the needed information. To help students improve their speaking skills, I used the website

www.englishspeak.com for learning.

To collect the data, I managed several steps elaborated as follows:

1. Pre-Test Procedure

I collected information about the cadets, including their names and the programs they are enrolled in. For this study, I made a special test to check the speaking skills of fourth-semester cadets studying Marine Mechanical Engineering Technology at Politeknik Bumi Akpelni. The sample featured TRPK A class as the experimental group and TRPK B class as the control group. I conducted a speaking pre-test for every cadet involved. The initial test was administered to both groups to assess their speaking abilities prior to the start of the treatment.

2. Post-Test Procedure

At the conclusion of the experiment, where cadets utilized the www.englishspeak.com site for learning, I administered a speaking test to both the experimental and control groups following the treatment. This assessment followed the cadets completing a pre-test and undergoing the treatment. I utilized performance as a form of oral assessment. The same materials were utilized for both the pre-test and post-test. I provided cadets with multiple subjects they had covered during the treatment sessions. The identical subjects were employed for both the pre-test and the post-test. Students selected a topic at random and discussed it immediately, leaving them little time to get ready. The post-test offered five topics for selection: congratulating, stating intention, introducing, giving compliments, and showing concern.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After I completed the post-test for both the control group and the experimental group, I began assessing the cadets' speaking skills. I used the Oral Proficiency Scoring Categories to determine their scores. The table below shows the average scores for the pre-test and post-test in five areas: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, content, and fluency, for both groups. To find the average score for each area in the pre-test and post-test, I added up all the scores for that specific skill, like pronunciation, and then divided by the number of cadets in the class. The detailed scores and how the averages were calculated for each aspect in both tests are shown in the tables.

After using the www.englishspeak.com learning website for the treatment, there were big improvements in different areas for the experimental group. In the pronunciation part, the score increased from 2.00 in the pre-test to 2.74 in the post-test, which is an increase of 0.74. This happened because I gave the students a treatment using the website. During this treatment, in addition to using English materials in the hand-outs, the cadets practiced pronouncing certain words from the dialogue. They listened to native speakers on the website and then repeated the words to practice the correct pronunciation. Because of this practice, they learned how to say each word properly. I checked their pronunciation by listening to their performance and writing down what they said on the tape.

The grammar score of the experimental group improved a lot. It went up by 0.74, from 1.95 in the pre-test to 2.69 in the post-test. This improvement happened after the cadets in the experimental group used the www.englishspeak.com learning website. Instead of just teaching grammar rules, the website showed real-life examples of how to use those rules in everyday conversations. This made it easier for the cadets to understand. Grammar rules can be confusing if second language learners don't use them often. When people learn a second language, they usually want to use it to talk with others. Speaking is the most common way to communicate. The next thing to look at is vocabulary. As shown in the table, the experimental group's vocabulary score increased a lot. The score went up by 1.44, from 2.25 in the pre-test to 3.69 in the post-test. This improvement was bigger than in other areas.

During the first meeting, which was the pre-test, I saw how little the cadets knew about vocabulary. They didn't have enough words to have a conversation in English. But after I explained things, gave them materials, and added more resources from the website, they learned a lot of new words. They weren't limited by the short time we have in class. They could study whenever they wanted and practice speaking skills whenever they had the chance. If they had questions, they could ask me during the next lesson or after class. The next part to look at is the content of the dialogue. As shown in the table, the experimental group's cadets scored much higher on this part. The increase in content is a bit less than the improvement in vocabulary. The content score went up from 2.72 in the pre-test to 3.84 in the post-test, which is an increase of 1.12. This improvement happened after I used the www.englishspeak.com learning website as a treatment.

In a conversation, cadets talk to each other and share ideas. Second language learners often find it hard to come up with the right content or idea to share. It takes time for them to feel comfortable and speak smoothly in a conversation. The treatment I provided using the www.englishspeak.com website shows that cadets can improve their ability to come up with good conversation content and speak more smoothly. The last thing I looked at was how fluent the students were speaking. The table indicates an increase in the fluency score of the experimental group. Their fluency rose by 0.71, from 2.08 in the initial assessment to 2.79 in the follow-up test. This enhancement took place after I utilized the www.englishspeak.com site to instruct the cadets.

Fluency is really important in conversations. The more fluent someone is in a language, the easier it is for them to communicate with others. Even though it's not easy for second language learners to be as fluent as native speakers, it is definitely possible. Fluency can be learned. There are many ways for second language learners, like English learners, to improve their fluency. Using the www.englishspeak.com website, the cadets get to practice in a way that feels like talking with native speakers. Even though they can't speak directly with natives through the website, the materials on the site are spoken by native speakers.

In short, the cadets in the experimental group showed a lot of improvement in their speaking skills after using the www.englishspeak.com website as part of the treatment. I can say this because the improvement in speaking for the experimental group was greater than that of the control group.

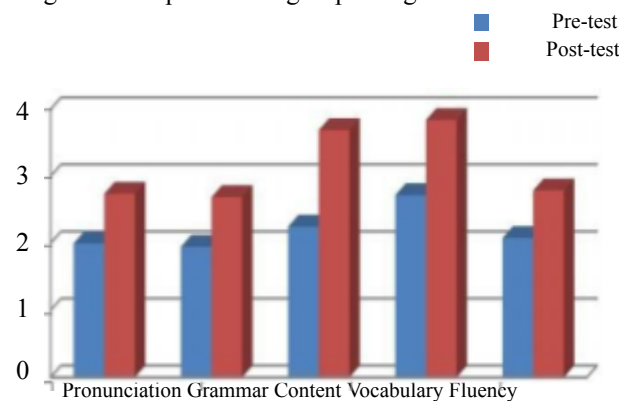


Figure 3. The Average of Each Dimension in the Experimental Group

Table 1. The Average Score of the Experimental and Control Group for Each Factor

Aspects	Group Item of Speaking Scoring	The Mean of Pre-Test	The Mean of Post-Test
Pronunciation	Experimental	2.00	2.74
	Control	1.79	2.18
Grammar	Experimental	1.95	2.69
	Control	2.92	3.10
Vocabulary	Experimental	2.25	3.69
	Control	2.69	2.95
Content	Experimental	2.72	3.84
	Control	2.15	2.33
Fluency	Experimental	2.08	2.79
	Control	2.00	2.02

Looking at the chart above, all the parts of the speaking skills improved a lot in the post-test for the experimental group. The red bar is higher than the blue one. The blue bar shows the cadets' scores before the test, and the red bar shows their scores after the test.

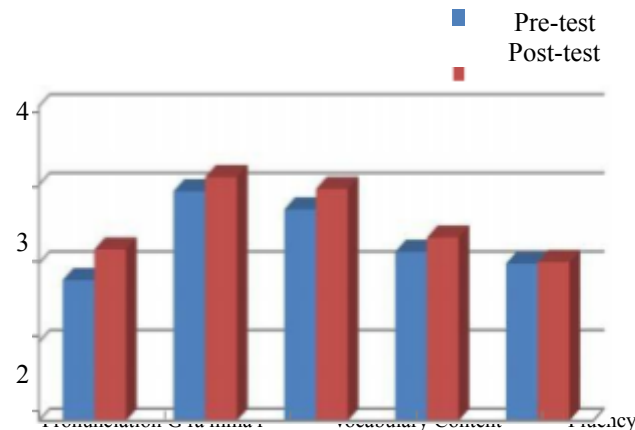


Figure 4. The average of every element in the Control Group

In the experimental group, the average score for the pre-test was 44.20 and the average for the post-test was 61.03. The average difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group was 16.83. In the control group, the average score before the test was 46.46, and the score after the test was 50.26. The average difference among those tests was 3.80. This indicates that the average difference of the experimental group exceeds that of the control group.

The following task involves calculating the standard deviation for both the experimental and control groups across each section, including the pre-test and post-test. The outcome of the t-test for the experimental group following the test was 2. The obtained value was subsequently compared to the t-value from the table at a significance level of 5% (0.05). The t-value from the table with 76 degrees of freedom equaled 1.67 given that the calculated t-value (2.78) exceeded the table value (1.67), this indicates that there was a notable difference between the averages of the two groups.

The results revealed a notable difference in the speaking test scores of cadets who used the www.englishspeak.com website compared to those who refrained from using it. The average results from the pre-test and the post-test varied for every group. In the post-test, both groups experienced a rise in their scores, yet the gap between them was quite significant. The group that utilized the website achieved an average score of 61.03, whereas the control group that did not utilize the website had an average of 50.26. Sure! Please provide the text you would like me to paraphrase. A t-test was performed to determine if this difference was significant. The value of t was 2.78, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.67. This indicates that there was a notable variation in speaking test scores between the two groups, illustrating that utilizing the www.englishspeak.com website had a meaningful impact. From the observation, utilizing the website for learning to speak English proved to be beneficial. The cadets grew increasingly enthusiastic and engaged actively in the teaching and learning experience.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that learners of English need to enhance their proficiency, particularly in speaking, upon completing their education. For cadets to excel in speaking, they must practice frequently and consistently. They should try to learn and practice English with a lecturer or a native speaker if they can. If that isn't possible, they can make use of an educational site that offers similar help. A great alternative is the site www.englishspeak.com.

I recommend that English lecturers consistently generate innovative and engaging methods for teaching. Lecturers in Indonesia or other areas where English is a second language can use www.englishspeak.com as a tool to aid in teaching specific English skills. Effective educators must consistently keep up with the newest instructional techniques to avoid lagging. Staying current and incorporating new teaching methods in every lesson can help maintain cadets' enthusiasm and motivation throughout each class.

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