

Learners' views on the use of Case-Based Learning and ICT in business English speaking

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Abstract

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the integration of Case-Based Learning (CBL) and information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching speaking skills in the English for Business course. Using a qualitative approach, the study was conducted at STIE Semarang involving 25 undergraduate students taking the course. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals to understand how students experience, interpret and evaluate the use of real business cases supported by digital technology in their speaking activities. The results showed that the majority of students perceived the ICT-based CBL approach as an interesting, contextualized method that helped improve their confidence and communicative skills. In addition, the use of ICT was considered to facilitate collaboration, provide authentic materials, and enable more flexible learning. However, challenges were also found, such as limited digital literacy and unequal participation in group work. The study concludes that the integration of CBL and ICT can create a dynamic and contextualized ESP learning environment that supports language development and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Case-Based Learning; ICT; ESP; English for Business; Speaking Skills; Student Perception

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly globalized world of business and economics, English language proficiency has become a crucial skill for university graduates entering professional fields (Hidayat, 2024; Prima et al., 2022; Sri Andayani, 2022). Within this context, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly Business English, plays a vital role in preparing students for real-world communication tasks such as negotiations, meetings, and presentations (Afifah & Maftukhin, 2024; Aguaguiña Pilla et al., 2025; Dou, 2024). Among the four language skills, speaking is perhaps the most directly linked to workplace performance (Lopez, 2022; Putra et al., 2022), as it involves not only linguistic ability but also strategic thinking, persuasion, and interpersonal communication. However, despite its importance, many learners in ESP contexts continue to face difficulties in developing effective speaking skills, leading to a significant gap between instructional goals and actual student performance (Pambudi & Nurhastuti, 2024; Sakti et al., 2024; Solihah et al., 2023).

This gap can often be traced to the limitations of conventional teaching approaches, which tend to prioritize accuracy, grammatical knowledge, and scripted dialogues over authentic and spontaneous language use. While such methods may offer a foundation for language structure, they often fail to equip students with the communicative competence needed in real-world business interactions (Kareem, 2020; Muhammad & Utami, 2022). Furthermore, speaking tasks in traditional settings are frequently decontextualized, lacking the professional relevance and complexity that characterize authentic business communication. As a result, students may be unable to transfer classroom knowledge to real-world speaking tasks, and their confidence in using English in business contexts remains low (Elyamany, 2021).

In response to these challenges, educators have increasingly turned to Case-Based Learning (CBL) as a pedagogical strategy that aligns more closely with the needs of ESP learners (Adilbekovna & Alikhanovich, 2024; Harida, 2015; Xie, 2020). CBL engages students in the analysis of real-life or simulated business cases, requiring them to discuss, evaluate, and solve problems in collaborative settings. This approach creates a learning environment that mirrors actual workplace dynamics, fostering not only language development but also critical thinking, decision-making, and teamwork (Alfiandra et al., 2022; Arianto & Fauziyah, 2020; Kaur et al., 2020). In speaking-focused CBL,

students are encouraged to articulate their thoughts, justify their opinions, and respond to differing viewpoints, all of which contribute to more meaningful and purposeful speaking practice (Samsudin, 2022; Thuy, 2023).

At the same time, the growing presence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has opened new opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of language learning (Benítez Díaz et al., 2019; Lembaho et al., 2022; Madhavi et al., 2023). ICT is not limited to hardware such as computers or mobile devices, but also includes software and applications that directly support the learning process (Damayanti et al., 2025; Nathania, 2024). ICT tools, such as *VoiceThread*, *Grammarly*, *Google Translate*, and *Pronunciation Application*, provide practical support for interactive and multimodal learning environments that extend beyond the classroom. In speaking instruction, these applications enable learners to record and share spoken tasks, receive feedback on accuracy, access quick translation support, and consult a digital dictionary. They can increase student engagement, provide greater autonomy, and support individualized learning paths, particularly in contexts where classroom time is limited.

While both CBL and ICT have individually demonstrated benefits in language education, particularly in fostering communicative competence and learner autonomy, research that examines their combined use remains limited especially within the specific context of Business English speaking instruction. More critically, the learners' perspectives on these methods are rarely explored in depth. Most studies to date have prioritized quantitative outcomes such as test scores or fluency gains or have focused on teachers' experiences implementing these innovations. As a result, the subjective experiences, motivations, and interpretations of learners remain underrepresented in the literature, despite their central role in shaping learning engagement and outcomes.

Several studies support the effectiveness of CBL in developing language and critical thinking skills. For example, McLean (2016) found that case discussions enhanced learners' ability to analyze issues and articulate arguments. Similarly, Yew and Goh (2016) highlighted the potential of CBL to promote learner motivation and collaborative learning. Meanwhile, research on ICT integration such as the studies by Khanh (2021) and Madhavi et al. (2023) has demonstrated improvements in learner confidence and participation in speaking activities through ICT. However, these studies often examined either CBL and ICT, or focused on general English settings rather than Business English. Moreover, few studies have directly investigated how learners experience the integration of CBL and ICT, particularly in terms of their perceptions of its effectiveness, challenges, and relevance to their professional goals.

This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring learners' views on the use of Case-Based Learning and ICT in Business English speaking instruction. Adopting a qualitative approach, it focuses on how students interpret and respond to these instructional methods, what benefits and obstacles they experience, and how they perceive their own speaking development in a technology-supported, case-based learning environment. Understanding these perceptions is essential, as they influence students' engagement, willingness to participate in speaking tasks, and long-term motivation to use English in professional contexts.

The theoretical foundation of this research draws from constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is constructed through active engagement, social interaction, and contextualized experiences (Kumar Shah, 2019; Olusegun, 2015). In this view, CBL functions as an authentic learning platform where students collaboratively solve problems and construct meaning through discussion. ICT, meanwhile, acts as both a cognitive and social tool, facilitating communication, access to information, and reflective practice. Furthermore, sociocultural perspectives on language learning, particularly Swain's in (Wong et al., 2025) output hypothesis, emphasize the importance of producing language in meaningful contexts, a principle that is strongly supported by the integration of both CBL and ICT.

What makes this study distinct from previous research is its focus on learners' lived experiences in a combined CBL-ICT learning environment within a Business English context. Unlike studies that examine outcomes from the teacher's or curriculum perspective, this research centers the student voice, offering detailed insights into how learners make sense of and engage with these methods. Additionally, the integration of case-based learning with ICT tools in a speaking-focused ESP course represents a relatively underexplored intersection. Most prior work addresses these elements in

isolation or within reading, writing, or general English instruction. By investigating the use of these methods together in a speaking-intensive Business English course, this study addresses a significant gap in the existing literature.

Moreover, the study provides context-specific insights from Indonesia, where ESP practices are still developing, and where access to technology varies widely. As such, it does not only contribute to the global discourse on innovation in ESP but also provides practical implications for curriculum designers, language educators, and policy makers seeking to improve the relevance and effectiveness of ESP speaking instruction. By shedding light on students' perceptions, this research aims to support more responsive, authentic, and learner-centered approaches in Business English classrooms.

Based on these concerns, the present study seeks to explore learners' perspectives on the integration of Case-Based Learning and ICT in Business English speaking instruction. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) How do learners perceive the use of Case-Based Learning in improving their Business English speaking skills? (2) How do learners experience the integration of ICT in supporting their speaking performance? (3) What benefits and challenges do learners encounter when engaging in speaking activities that combine CBL and ICT?

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore learners' views on the use of Case-Based Learning (CBL) supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Business English speaking. The research was conducted at STIE Semarang, an institution that integrates English for Business into its curriculum to prepare students for communication in professional settings. The qualitative approach was selected to allow for a deeper exploration of students' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the instructional practices they engaged in throughout the course.

Participants in the study were selected using purposive sampling. They were undergraduate students enrolled in the Business English course who had been actively involved in a series of case-based speaking activities enhanced by the use of ICT tools. A total of 25 students, both male and female, voluntarily participated in the study. To maintain confidentiality and protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were used, and all identifying details were removed during transcription and reporting.

Data were collected using two primary instruments: semi-structured interviews and reflective learning journals. The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant after the completion of the instructional cycle. These interviews were designed to elicit detailed responses about learners' perceptions of the effectiveness, challenges, and engagement associated with the use of CBL and ICT in their speaking development. Interview questions focused on their experiences during case discussions, the use of digital platforms, interaction with peers, and perceived progress in speaking skills. Interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, Bahasa Indonesia, to ensure clear communication and were subsequently transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

In addition to interviews, students were also asked to submit reflective journals that documented their thoughts and feelings about their learning experiences. These journals served as a complementary data source and provided insight into the participants' evolving perceptions over time. Entries typically included comments on the speaking tasks, the effectiveness of ICT tools used, the relevance of the business cases discussed, and their individual or group performance.

Data from both instruments were analysed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The analysis began with familiarization, where the researcher read all transcripts and journal entries multiple times to gain a holistic understanding of the data. Initial codes were then generated by identifying key ideas, repeated phrases, or emotionally charged expressions related to the research focus. These codes were grouped into categories, which were further refined into overarching themes that captured recurring patterns or significant meanings in the data. Throughout the process, special attention was paid to ensure that themes were grounded in participants' actual words and that their voices were authentically represented.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed triangulation. The use of two data sources, interviews and journals, allowed for the triangulation of data, thereby

strengthening the reliability of the findings. Ethical clearance was obtained prior to data collection, and all participants gave informed consent, with assurances of anonymity and the voluntary nature of their participation.

This methodology provided a rich and detailed account of learners' perspectives, offering insight into how CBL and ICT function together to shape students' experiences in learning to speak English for business contexts. The use of reflective instruments and a systematic analytic process allowed the study to capture the nuanced and complex nature of learner perceptions in a real educational setting.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, which aimed to explore students' perspectives on the integration of Case-Based Learning (CBL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Business English speaking instruction. Thematic analysis of student interviews and reflective journals revealed several recurring themes related to learners' experiences. The discussion is organized around three core themes: (1) Learners' Perceptions on the Use of Case-Based Learning in Improving Business English Speaking Skills, (2) Learners' Experiences of ICT Integration in Supporting Speaking Performance, and (3) Benefits and Challenges of Engaging in Speaking Activities Combining CBL and ICT. These themes are supported by illustrative student quotes and interpreted in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives and previous research.

Learners' Perceptions on the Use of Case-Based Learning in Improving Business English Speaking Skills

Most learners expressed that Case-Based Learning (CBL) significantly enhanced their speaking competence in Business English. They felt that discussing authentic and contextualized business scenarios pushed them to use language more meaningfully and strategically. Unlike conventional speaking activities that often rely on scripted conversations or decontextualized role-plays, CBL tasks required learners to analyze, argue, and present ideas as if they were in real-world business meetings.

S3: *"We didn't just memorize dialogue. We had to understand the problem, discuss it in English, and find a solution. It felt more real and useful for future work."*

S11: *"It felt more real when we had to solve a problem from a real company. I was not just practicing grammar, but how to talk like a business person."*

S15: *"CBL made me feel like we were not in a classroom but in a business meeting. I liked how we had to prepare and speak like professionals,"*

Learners also noted improvements in fluency, vocabulary usage, and professional tone. They reported being more aware of how to express agreement, disagreement, negotiation, and persuasion in English. The skills aligned with business communication needs. Moreover, repeated engagement with diverse case topics exposed them to various expressions and language structures.

S7: *"After several case discussions, I felt more confident using business terms and expressing my opinion clearly."*

S8: *"During our group presentations, I noticed I could express my opinions more smoothly and use better vocabulary. I started using phrases like 'from a business perspective' or 'let's weigh the alternatives' which made me sound more confident and professional. I also paid more attention to how I agreed or disagreed politely."*

However, some students mentioned initial discomfort when facing unfamiliar case topics or unfamiliar speaking structures, especially if they lacked background knowledge.

S1: *"At first, I felt confused because I didn't really understand the case topic. It was about company mergers, and I had no idea what that meant. I was nervous to speak because I didn't know the right words to use or how to explain my ideas. It made me hesitate during the discussion."*

This highlights the importance of scaffolding and topic selection in designing CBL activities.

Learners' Experiences of ICT Integration in Supporting Speaking Performance

ICT integration, through tools like Pronunciation Application, Google Translate, Voice Thread, and Grammarly, was widely viewed as a supportive and engaging element in the speaking tasks. Learners described how ICT allowed them to plan, rehearse, visualize content, and manage anxiety. Recording presentations, in particular, helped students practice multiple times before submitting the final version, which contributed to a sense of control over their performance.

S4: *"I could record myself and check how I sounded. It helped me fix pronunciation or improve my explanation."*

S6: *"Recording my part helped me practice a lot before submitting it. I could hear myself and try again if needed."*

Learners also appreciated using slides or visual aids to support their speaking. They reported that preparing visual content made them more organized in structuring their spoken delivery and aligning it with audience expectations.

In collaborative projects, ICT tools enabled real-time communication, idea sharing, and division of labor. Google Translate, Grammarly and Pronunciation Application were frequently used for rehearsal and feedback.

S2: *"We used Google Translate to make scripts and then discussed how to say things better in English through Pronunciation App."*

S10: *"We used Voice Threads and pronunciation App to make our presentations more professional. It motivated me to speak clearly,"*

Benefits and Challenges of Engaging in Speaking Activities Combining CBL and ICT

Students reported a combination of pedagogical, cognitive, and affective benefits when engaging in speaking tasks that merged CBL and ICT. First, they experienced increased confidence as they had multiple opportunities to prepare and collaborate before presenting. The structured nature of cases and the availability of digital tools allowed them to plan, draft, revise, and reflect.

Second, learners felt more engaged due to the relevance of topics and the interactive format. Realistic business situations prompted curiosity and critical thinking, while ICT tools made the learning process dynamic and multimodal.

S5: *"It was not boring like just talking in front of class. We did slides, made videos, gave feedback—it was active and fun."*

Third, many students felt that this approach mirrored professional practices and helped shape their professional identities. Playing roles like managers, consultants, or sales representatives gave them insight into how English is used in workplace discourse.

However, challenges also emerged. Some students struggled with time management, especially when juggling speaking, editing visuals, and preparing documentation. Others found group coordination difficult when members were passive or did not contribute equally. A few learners were also overwhelmed by task complexity and high expectations for performance.

S9: *"Sometimes I felt stressed. Too many tasks in one project—presentation, reflection, slides, recording. It was a lot."*

Nevertheless, technical issues such as internet instability, unfamiliarity with tools, and time-consuming editing were cited as barriers. Some learners also felt nervous due to connectivity issues or limited digital presentation skills. These findings suggest that while ICT offers many benefits, its use must be accompanied by technical support and digital literacy guidance.

S12: *"I was very anxious because my internet kept disconnecting. I worried my group would be upset if I was late to submit the video. It was hard sometimes about the connection."*

S13: *“Using video editing apps was stressful at first. I didn’t know how to cut or add subtitles, and it took a long time. I wanted to make it perfect, but I ended up spending too much time and feeling frustrated.”*

These insights reveal that while combining CBL and ICT can offer rich learning experiences, it also demands high levels of coordination, motivation, and instructional guidance. Educators need to balance challenge with support, and clearly communicate objectives, timelines, and roles.

Discussion

Case-Based Learning as a Catalyst for Authentic Speaking Development

Findings related to the first research question reveal that Case-Based Learning (CBL) significantly enhances learners’ experiences in developing Business English speaking skills. This aligns with contextual learning theory (Nur et al., 2020), which emphasizes the importance of presenting learning content within real-world contexts to make it more meaningful. CBL allows learners to engage in authentic situations where speaking is not only about completing academic tasks but also about critical thinking, negotiation, and decision-making, as in actual business interactions (Haryati et al., 2022; Tsubira et al., 2022).

Previous studies (Dewi & Rahayu, 2023; Guiyu & Yi, 2017; Japar, 2018) have supported the notion that case-based approaches promote active, collaborative, and reflective learning. It is the key principles in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. In this study, learners reported feeling more confident, in control of the message they delivered, and more capable of using vocabulary and grammar that was appropriate for specific business contexts.

CBL also encouraged strategic and communicative language use. This is consistent with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles (Al-Amri, 2021; Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021), which place a strong focus on language function and purposeful communication. In this context, CBL served as a bridge between linguistic competence and professional communication skills.

Nonetheless, learners also faced challenges, particularly in terms of understanding unfamiliar case content or lacking background knowledge. This highlights the need for effective scaffolding and carefully chosen case topics that are aligned with learners’ proficiency levels and interests. Instructors are advised to offer pre-task support such as business glossaries, background briefings, or modeled presentations to facilitate learners’ engagement with complex speaking tasks.

ICT as a Supportive Ecosystem for Speaking Performance

For the second research question, findings demonstrated that the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in supporting speaking performance. These findings are supported by AlShaikh et al. (2024) and Candido & Cattaneo (2025) finding about Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that appropriate use of visual and audio media enhances comprehension and retention. In this study, ICT tools such as Voice Thread, Grammarly, Pronunciation App and Google translate allowed learners to plan and organize their oral output more systematically.

ICT also fostered self-regulated learning. Learners appreciated the ability to rehearse, re-record, and reflect on their speaking performances, allowing them to make improvements autonomously, a process aligned with self-regulated learning theory (Teng, 2022). The presence of digital artifacts helped them assess their performance, reduce anxiety, and focus on clarity and message delivery.

Additionally, technology promoted collaborative learning, enabling learners to participate actively. This confirms Vali (2022) and Resta and Laferrière (2007) findings that digital integration in ESP enhances engagement and emotional investment in project-based learning tasks. However, the study also identified key challenges such as unstable internet connections and limited digital literacy among some learners.

These findings indicate that successful ICT integration must go beyond simply providing tools. It requires pedagogical support, ongoing training, and flexibility in instructional design. Teachers must ensure that all learners have equal access to technological resources and understand how to use them effectively in language learning tasks.

The Dual Faces of CBL and ICT Integration: Empowerment and Complexity

The third research question revealed a duality in learners' experiences. On one hand, they felt empowered, while on the other hand, they encountered notable challenges. In terms of benefits, learners reported heightened motivation, a greater sense of ownership over their speaking tasks, and enhanced professional awareness through role-play and simulation. These outcomes are closely linked to the development of professional identity in ESP contexts (Ayar, 2021; Samorodova et al., 2022), where students assume roles like marketing managers, business consultants, or finance executives while discussing cases.

Through these roles, learners had the opportunity to express themselves using specialized discourse, a key aspect of disciplinary communication. Such exposure helped them move beyond general language use and develop genre-specific speaking competencies relevant to the business world (Adilbekovna & Alikhanovich, 2024).

However, the integration of both CBL and ICT introduced complexity. Learners were required to manage linguistic, cognitive, technical, and social demands simultaneously, leading to feelings of stress or overload. This reflects the principles of Cognitive Load Theory (Kala & Ayas, 2023), which warns that excessive task complexity can hinder learning outcomes when working memory is overwhelmed.

To mitigate these effects, instructional strategies such as simplified tasks, phased deadlines, and peer support systems can be implemented. Instructors are encouraged to use clear rubrics, offer structured feedback, and create spaces for learner reflection to help students process and navigate their experiences effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study explored learners' views on the integration of Case-Based Learning (CBL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Business English speaking instruction, focusing on how CBL supports speaking skills, how learners experience ICT, and the benefits and challenges of combining both. The findings showed that CBL was effective in promoting not only language development but also critical thinking, strategic communication, and professional identity, as learners engaged in authentic business scenarios and role-based tasks. ICT tools enriched the learning experience by enabling collaboration, reflection, and multimodal expression, although issues such as digital fatigue, unequal access, and task complexity posed challenges. Overall, the combination of CBL and ICT created a dynamic, learner-centered environment that supported holistic skill development and better prepared students for real-world communication in professional contexts. These findings suggest that ESP instructors should thoughtfully design case-based tasks and integrate digital tools in a supportive and inclusive manner. Future research could further investigate the long-term impacts of this approach in workplace performance and explore its application across diverse ESP domains and learner profiles. By placing learners' experiences at the center, this study highlights the transformative potential of innovative, context-sensitive pedagogy in Business English speaking instruction.

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