

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN COLLEGE THROUGH DRAMA PERFORMER: A CASE STUDY

By

Muhammad As'ad¹, Ardiansyah Ahmad², Merlyn Fatihatul Hanadi³

¹²³English Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Gombong, Kebumen, Indonesia

Email: ¹muhasad@unimgo.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received Nov 15, 2024

Revised Dec 03, 2024

Accepted Dec 18, 2024

Keywords:

English speaking skills,
Educational drama,
Classroom Action Research

ABSTRACT

English speaking skills are crucial for academic and professional success, yet college students face internal (e.g., lack of confidence, fear of judgment) and external challenges (e.g., limited practice opportunities). This study explored the use of educational drama to enhance these skills through Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles. Activities included role-playing, improvisation, and real-life simulations. Results showed marked improvements in speaking accuracy (Cycle I: +47.49%, Cycle II: +13.17%) and fluency (Cycle I: +18.51%, Cycle II: +14.30%). Student engagement rose from 70.6% to 99.6%. Despite challenges like low participation and classroom management, adjustments in Cycle II proved effective. The study highlights educational drama as a transformative approach to building confidence, vocabulary, and fluency, recommending future research on motivation and classroom optimization.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Muhammad As'ad

Teknologi Informasi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Gombong, Kebumen, Indonesia

Email: muhasad@unimugo.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

English speaking skills are critical for global communication and often serve as an indicator of individual success at both academic and professional levels. In the college context, English speaking skills play a vital role, as many academic curricula require their use in discussions, presentations, and research. However, many students face difficulties in developing these speaking skills, often caused by internal and external factors.

One of the main challenges faced by students is a lack of confidence in speaking English. Research shows that fear of making mistakes and worry about being judged by others hinder students' ability to speak fluently and effectively (Putri et al., 2020). Additionally, limited vocabulary and problems with pronunciation and intonation are significant obstacles to improving English speaking skills.

External factors also play a major role in this issue. Limited time in class and insufficient practice opportunities often prevent students from practicing regularly (Manurung & Izar, 2019). In many universities, English language learning time is often restricted, leaving students without adequate opportunities to engage in real-life speaking situations.

To address these challenges, various learning methods have been proposed. One method that has gained attention is **educational drama**, which allows students to practice speaking in a natural and interactive context. This method helps overcome awkwardness and enhance speaking skills through activities like role-playing and real-life simulations (Wessels, 1987). However, the successful implementation of this method requires efficient time and resource management to ensure the learning process is effective without adding undue burden on students or teachers (Nha, 2009). As Başaran (2023) explains, the dynamic nature of drama activities demands a flexible yet structured approach from educators to integrate these techniques effectively into language teaching.

Recent research highlights that interactive and active participation-based approaches, including technology in language learning, significantly improve students' speaking skills (Jiang & Smith, 2023). Innovations such as language games and real-life situation simulations also enhance learning by making it more contextual and engaging (Patel & Wang, 2023). These strategies, coupled with educational drama, offer a robust framework for addressing challenges in English speaking instruction.

This study explores the application of educational drama as a method to improve English speaking skills among early-semester college students. It examines how drama can be applied effectively in educational contexts and the challenges that may arise during the process. By identifying success factors, this study aims to offer solutions to enhance English learning quality and support students in overcoming the difficulties they encounter.

2. METHOD

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1992). This method aims to improve the English-speaking ability of first-semester students through the application of the educational drama method. The CAR model applied includes four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This research will be carried out in two cycles, with each cycle lasting three meetings. Each cycle begins with planning relevant materials, followed by the application of drama techniques in learning activities, followed by student participation observation, and ends with reflection to evaluate the results and design improvements.

The research instrument consists of several measuring instruments to collect data comprehensively. The speaking test is used to measure students' speaking ability, focusing on two main indicators: pronunciation accuracy and speaking fluency. In addition, observation sheets are used to record the level of student participation during the learning process. Interviews are also conducted to obtain in-depth perspectives from students about their experiences with the educational drama method. Additional documentation such as field notes and video recordings are also used to document the implementation of the method and the interactions that occur during the learning process.

The use of educational drama in PTK aims to create an interactive and creative learning environment, which is expected to encourage students to practice speaking English more actively. This drama technique involves activities such as role-playing, improvisation, and simulation of real situations designed to improve students' speaking skills in a more natural and engaging context. By involving students directly in drama-based activities, it is expected that they can overcome awkwardness, expand their vocabulary, and improve pronunciation and intonation aspects. The results of this study are expected to provide insight into the effectiveness of implementing the educational drama method in improving English speaking skills. In addition, this study will also identify challenges and obstacles that may be faced during the implementation of this method, as well as provide recommendations for future improvements. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective English learning methods in higher education.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this classroom action research focused on improving students' accuracy and fluency. The findings cover two main aspects: students' speaking ability and observation

3.1 First cycle

3.1.1 Speaking accuracy

The results of the speaking test conducted in the first cycle showed a significant difference in students' speaking accuracy between the pre-test and cycle I. The following are the details of the average scores and percentages for the three speaking accuracy indicators:

Table 1. Speaking Accuracy

Indicators	Pre-Test (Skor)	Pre-Test (%)	Cycle I (Skor)	Cycle I (%)	Improvement (%)
Vocabulary	6.12	61.20	6.97	69.70	13.89
Pronunciation	4.8	48.00	6.08	60.80	26.67
Grammar	6.44	64.40	6.88	68.80	6.83
Total	17.36	173.60	19.93	199.30	47.49
Average	5.78	57.80	6.64	66.40	15.83

From the table above, it can be seen that there was an increase in students' speaking accuracy between the pre-test and cycle I. Vocabulary scores increased from 6.12 (61.20%) to 6.97 (69.70%), pronunciation increased from 4.8 (48.00%) to 6.08 (60.80%), and grammar increased from 6.44 (64.40%) to 6.88 (68.80%). The total speaking accuracy score increased by 47.49%.

3.1.2 Speaking fluency

The following table shows the average score and percentage of students' speaking fluency between the pre-test and cycle I:

Table 2. Speaking Fluency

Indicators	Pre-Test (Skor)	Pre-Test (%)	Cycle I (Skor)	Cycle I (%)	Improvement (%)
Fluency	5.78	57.80	6.85	68.50	18.51

The increase in speaking fluency from the pre-test to cycle I was 18.51%, with the average score increasing from 5.78 (57.80%) to 6.85 (68.50%).

3.1.3 Classification of scores

The table below shows the classification of students' average scores in terms of fluency and comprehensibility of speaking during cycle I:

Table 3. Classification of scores

Coalification	Skor	Fluency (%)	Comprehensibility (%)
Very good	6	-	-
Very good	5	-	-
Good	4	13.33%	13.33%
Fair	3	56.67%	33.33%
Inadequate	2	36.67%	53.33%
Unacceptable	1	6.67%	-

From the data above, it can be seen that 33.33% of students managed to achieve the "Good" classification in fluency, while 66.67% did not achieve the expected level of success. For comprehensibility, 53.33% of students were in the "Inadequate" category, indicating significant challenges in comprehension.

3.1.4 Reflection

During the first cycle, the researcher applied educational drama techniques in the learning process. Although there were some improvements in accuracy and fluency of speaking, the overall results showed that students had not fully achieved the expected targets. In particular, there was a lack of participation and focus on the material, as well as low student scores in the application of educational drama techniques.

3.2 Second cycle

3.2.1 Speaking accuracy

The results of the speaking test showed a significant improvement in students' speaking accuracy from Cycle I to Cycle II. The following is a breakdown of the average scores and percentages for the three indicators of speaking accuracy:

Table 4. Speaking Accuracy

Indicators	Cycle I (Skor)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (Skor)	Cycle II (%)	Improvement (%)
Vocabularies	6.97	69.70	7.88	78.80	13.05
Pronunciation	6.08	60.80	7.31	73.10	20.23
Grammar	6.88	68.80	7.31	73.10	6.25
Total	19.93	199.30	22.50	225.00	39.53
Average	6.64	66.40	7.50	75.00	13.17

From the data above, it can be seen that speaking accuracy increased significantly between Cycle I and Cycle II. Vocabulary increased from 6.97 (69.70%) in Cycle I to 7.88 (78.80%) in Cycle II, pronunciation increased from 6.08 (60.80%) to 7.31 (73.10%), and grammar increased from 6.88 (68.80%) to 7.31 (73.10%). The total increase in speaking accuracy from Cycle I to Cycle II was 13.17%. Speaking Accuracy Improvement Chart

The following chart shows the improvement in speaking accuracy from Cycle I to Cycle II for vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar:

3.2.2 Speaking fluency

The following table shows the mean scores and percentages of students' speaking fluency between Cycle I and Cycle II:

Table 5 Speaking Fluency

Indicators	Cycle I (Skor)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (Skor)	Cycle II (%)	Improvement (%)
Fluency	6.85	68.50	7.83	78.30	14.30

The improvement in speaking fluency from Cycle I to Cycle II was 14.30%, with the mean score increasing from 6.85 (68.50%) in Cycle I to 7.83 (78.30%) in Cycle II.

3.2.3 Classification of scores

The following table shows the classification of students' average scores in terms of fluency and comprehensibility of speaking during Cycle II:

Table 6. Speaking Fluency

Classification	Skor	Fluency (%)	Comprehensibility (%)
Very good	6	-	-
Good enough	5	-	-
Good	4	13.33%	40%
Fair	3	86.67%	53.33%
Inadequate	2	13.33%	60.67%
Unacceptable	1	-	-

In Cycle II, 40% of students were categorized as "Good" in terms of comprehensibility, indicating an improvement compared to Cycle I. However, 90% of students still had not achieved the expected success category.

3.2.4 Student activeness in learning

Observation of student activeness showed significant improvement between Cycle I and Cycle II:

Table 7. Student activeness

Cycle	Meeting	Average Score (%)
I	1	77%
	2	39%
	3	96%
	Average	70.6%
II	1	97%
	2	100%
	3	105%
	Average	99.6%

The increase in student activeness from Cycle I to Cycle II was very clear. The average student activeness increased from 70.6% in Cycle I to 99.6% in Cycle II. This change indicates that students become more involved and enthusiastic in the learning process when educational drama techniques are applied more effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the data shows a significant increase in students' speaking accuracy and fluency between Cycle I and Cycle II. Although there are still some students who have not reached the success category, the improvement in student activeness indicates that the application of educational drama techniques has had a positive impact on their learning process. By increasing motivation and managing the class more effectively, it is hoped that results will be better in the future.

REFERENCES

- [1] S. Başaran, "How to Use Drama Techniques in English Language Teaching: Guiding Principles for Teachers," *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*. [Online]. Available: <https://dergipark.org.tr>
- [2] A. Burns, *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*. Routledge, 2010. doi: 10.4324/9780203836684
- [3] J. Elliott, *Action Research for Educational Change*. Open University Press, 1991. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8527.1992.tb00370.x



-
- [4] D. Coghlan and T. Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*. Sage Publications, 2014. doi: 10.4135/9781473913865
 - [5] X. Jiang and R. Smith, "The Impact of Interactive Learning Technologies on English Speaking Skills in Higher Education," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 123–136, 2023. doi: 10.17507/jltr.1402.01
 - [6] S. Manurung and N. Izar, "External Factors Affecting English Speaking Skills in Higher Education," *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 10, no. 12, pp. 45–58, 2019. doi: 10.7176/JEP/10-12-05
 - [7] G. E. Mills, *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher*. Pearson, 2014. doi: 10.1080/14623943.2014.950351
 - [8] T. Nha, "Drama as an Effective Pedagogical Tool in Language Education," *Language Learning Journal*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 75–86, 2009. doi: 10.1080/09571730902754959
 - [9] K. Patel and L. Wang, "Innovative Approaches to Enhancing English Speaking Proficiency in College Students," *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 789–805, 2023. doi: 10.1002/tesq.439
 - [10] R. Putri, T. Kusuma, and D. Utami, "Internal Challenges in English Speaking: A Case Study of Indonesian College Students," *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 15–28, 2020. doi: 10.24071/ijelt.v16i1.3413
 - [11] E. T. Stringer, *Action Research*. Sage Publications, 2013. doi: 10.4135/9781412986007
 - [12] J. Wessels, *Drama in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK