

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPEAKING FOR GENERAL COMMUNICATION SUBJECTS: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS DURING ONLINE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine students' perceptions of online learning in the Speaking for General Communication course during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was applied as a case study design. The sample of the research is the second-semester students of English Language Education at a private university in Riau, Indonesia. In this study, there were 29 students who answered a questionnaire consisting of 10 statements from 5 indicators. The data presented showed that the dominant percentage of the total students gave a positive preference for this course in online learning. The students agree and have a positive opinion on the perception of online learning in the Speaking for General Communication course because teachers can design learning creatively and students can experience various learning experiences through digital tools in achieving learning objectives.

Keywords: Students' Perception, Speaking, Online Learning

1) INTRODUCTION

COVID19 or called coronavirus disease is widespread in many countries or around the world. A pandemic coronavirus infection (COVID19) has emerged, affecting all education (Suartama, 2020). Educational system had to learn virtually and did the school activities through the internet or online. It seems that pandemic coronavirus (COVID-19) has been shown to affect all education (Coman et al., 2020), especially in the university environment. Teachers and students, whether they like it or not, should attend online classes to prevent the spread of this pandemic (Saidi et al., 2021). During online teaching, this does not force students to focus on the learning that is happening, which can lead to students falling asleep during the learning process. Without a tutor or supervisor in the teaching and learning

process, there will be problems at the time of learning, for example, network issues, support, or learning motivation through a home or online study (Gustiani, 2020).

The importance of focusing on English skills is especially important for those learning a second language (Tseng and Yeh, 2019). This is due to the fact that English is a global communication medium that allows students to share ideas and opinions with people from other countries. English is the international language of communication, which makes English very important. By understanding the advantages of having friends from abroad.

Effective communication in the classroom can have a positive impact on the learning process (Etfita, 2018). Communication skills include both oral (conversation, negotiation, and discussion) and non-oral (writing, facial expressions, and body language) aspects (Alshumaimeri and Alhumud, 2021). In other words, mastering the ability to speak fluently in a foreign language is not easy.

Learning to speak for general communication requires at least four micro skills, namely basic grammar, good vocabulary, good pronunciation, and good intonation in that context (Suryani et al., 2021). Students of the First Semester English Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Riau have a General Speaking Communication course.

This course aims to improve students' speaking skills related to general topics. Since, online learning is less efficient because of the lack of interaction between students and lecturers, as for interactions in general communication courses through zoom and assignments, which generally require direct interaction so that students' speaking skills appear to have improved. This study creates student perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning in improving their communication skills in the Speaking for General Communication course.

Speaking Skill Improvement

Foreign language speaking skills require a lot of practice to improve. Speaking is learned to develop students' communication skills (Hasibuan et al., 2022). Improving first-year students' English language skills is a collaborative effort. Dialogue and monologue are the two main types of speaking. To communicate, speakers in dialogue must speak alternately, whereas in monologue, the speaker is a single character who has a speech to deliver and does not require a partner. A monologue is defined as an individual oral work performed by a student with the goal of training all areas of the language system and improving the student's language skills and self-confidence (Karpovich et al., 2021).

Online Learning Perception

Perception refers to how people interpret and describe information about environmental conditions. Understanding student online learning is the cognitive and affective interpretation and description of students who can provide information to the public about the process and situation of online learning. Concurrent factors can also contribute to shifting perceptions of online learning, as some students are unable to achieve higher order thinking skills by using technology to solve practical problems (Suartama, 2020).

Speaking for General Communication Course

As a first step toward being able to speak English, begin with the fundamentals, namely basic skills for general communication in daily activities. Speaking for general communication is a speaking skill that includes aspects of using interactive language as a daily communication tool. Learning to speak for general communication necessitates the acquisition of at least four micro-skills, namely basic grammar skills, a good vocabulary, proper pronunciation, and proper intonation in certain contexts. It can be used in these four skills by allowing students to practice language functions such as self-introduction, description of things, asking for and providing daily help (Suryani et al., 2021).

Characteristic of Learning Face to Face and Online Learning

Through various features, the virtual classroom provides an online environment for students and teachers to communicate simultaneously. Classrooms are adaptable, affordable, practical, and easily accessible, boosting students' skills and confidence, and learning can be accessed at any time and from any location. Then, Face-to-face learning can help to establish and maintain relationships between teachers and students. Can directly interact with friends, build students' confidence when asking questions in class, and explore and develop self-ability (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021).

Advantages and Disadvantages

The main benefits of virtual classrooms are the flexibility and convenience they provide, particularly for students who live in remote locations. Additionally, virtual classrooms are appropriate for students who may be too shy to participate in classroom discussions. Then there are some constraints with virtual classes. Technical issues are a critical issue in online learning that can lead to a negative student experience. Furthermore, this type of classroom may not suit

all learning styles, though technological advancements may address these issues (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021).

2) METHODS

The method used in this research was quantitative. Quantitative research method is a research method that examines a particular population or sample. The data was collected from The First Semester English Education Department Islamic University of Riau. The research instrument is a number of questionnaire taken based on the respondent's data. The questionnaire were adapted from (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021). The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out the effectiveness of Speaking for General Communication Subjects.

3) RESULTS

In this study, to answer research questions, the researcher describes the results of the average calculation obtained from a statement consisting of 10 items in Table 1.

Table 1. The Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Speaking for General Communication Conducted Online

NO	QUESTIONS	ANSWER (%)				
		SD	DA	N	A	SA
1	I feel more engaged in conversations and discussions in virtual classes than in traditional classes.	10.3	13.8	41.4	10.3	24.1
2	In virtual lessons, it is easier to interact with instructors and peers on Speaking for General Communication course.	6.9	6.9	51.7	0	37.9
3	Speaking for General Communication course at online classrooms make me feel more motivated to participate in discussions.	0	6.9	51.7	6.9	37.9
4	Online classrooms play a significant role in improving my oral communications skills on Speaking for General Communication course.	0	3.4	62.1	6.9	34.5
5	The lack of face-to-face communication makes it difficult to participate in discussions on Speaking for General Communication course.	3.4	20.7	44.8	27.6	10.3
6	Speaking for General Communication course in virtual lessons, it is easier to interact with my instructors and peers.	3.4	10.3	58.6	6.9	27.6
7	I feel more confident when I speak in virtual classrooms on Speaking for General Communication course.	0	3.4	41.4	27.6	31
8	Using virtual classrooms helps me discover my communication problems in Speaking for General Communication course.	0	3.4	58.6	13.8	31

9	In Online classrooms, there are more opportunities for me to speak on Speaking for General Communication course than in traditional classrooms.	3.4	10.3	55.2	10.3	31
10	There is no difference between offline and online classrooms in improving my communication skills on Speaking for General Communication course.	10.3	24.1	37.9	13.8	17.2

Table 1 shows the data from the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of speaking for general communication subjects during online learning in the first semester of English education major. Of the ten questions given, it can be interpreted that most of the respondents gave a positive response to online learning in the Speaking for General Communication subject. This can be seen from the responses to the questionnaire they answered. In the first statement, 10.3% agreed and 13.8% disagreed that learning the Speaking for General Communication course was not effective online because of their lack of involvement in carrying out conversations and discussions. The second statement revealed that 0% or no one answered agree and 6, 9% who do not agree that learning Speaking for General Communication does not make it easier for them to interact with instructors and colleagues in the Speaking for General Communication course.

The third statement revealed that 6.9% agreed and 6.9% disagreed which they answered neutrally that speaking courses for general communication in online classes made them feel more motivated to participate in discussions.

In the fourth statement, 6.9% agree and 3.4% disagree revealing that online classrooms play an important role in improving their oral communication skills. In the fifth statement, 27.6% agree and 20, 7% disagreed that in online classes the lack of face-to-face communication made it difficult to participate in discussions in the Speaking for General Communication course.

In the sixth statement, 6.9% agreed and 10.3% disagreed that in learning Speaking for General Communication it was easier to interact with instructors and colleagues online. The seventh statement, that 27.6% agreed and 3.4% disagreed revealed that they felt more confident when I spoke in a virtual class on the Speaking for General Communication course. The eighth statement, that 13.8% agreed and 3.4% disagreed revealed that using virtual classrooms helped them find communication problems in the Speaking for General Communication course.

In the ninth statement, 10.3% agree and 10, 3% disagreed that online learning gave them more opportunities to speak in the Speaking for General Communication course than in a traditional classroom. On the tenth statement, that 13.8% agree and 24.1% disagree revealed that there is no difference between offline and online classes in improving my communication skills on the Speaking for General Communication course. Of the ten statements, it was revealed that students had problems in doing online learning in the Speaking for General Communication course and some did not have problems in online learning.

4) DISCUSSION

Furthermore, from the research, each item in this study is associated with 5 indicators from 10 statements.

Speaking Skill Improvement

By learning to speak, you can improve your communicative ability to convey ideas and information well (Ahmad, Rubayyi, and Etfita, 2022). Improvement in speaking affects the competence of students (Rachman, 2018) . Students agree that online learning in speaking for general communication courses can improve their speaking skills which can be proven from the number of presentations 41,4%.

Online Learning Perception

In order for success in online learning, there needs to be interaction and communication between students and teachers (Rachman, 2018). Students agree with the statement that they are more involved and easier to interact in conversation and discussion when learning in class online supported by this research presentation.

Speaking for General Communication Course

The need for considerations that must be made by the teacher in the delivery of material in learning of speaking for general communication course (Nilayon and Brahmakasikara, 2018). In online learning for this subject, it was found that teachers and students could easily interact and feel motivated to participate in discussions.

Characteristic of Learning Face to Face and Online Learning

Technology can affect learning English because it provides easy access to information (Tseng and Yeh, 2019). There is not a lot of intense communication which causes difficulties in discussions in online classes but the perception of students also agrees that they have the

opportunity to speak in class which results can be seen in this study in the questionnaire section. Moreover, there are differences between face-to-face and online classes in students' perceptions of improving their speaking skills in the speaking for general communication course as evidenced by the research presentation, which is 34.4%.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages in online learning such as convenience, flexibility, being able to re-watch material, save time and travel to face-to-face classes (Ouma, 2021). Although, not all students like learning online because of different learning styles or other factors further research can provide further explanation. In this research, students agree that through online classes they can find their problems in communication as evidenced by the presentation of 44.8%.

5) CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that some students agree and have a positive opinion on the perception of online learning in the Speaking for General Communication course because teachers can design learning creatively and students can experience various learning experiences through digital tools in achieving learning objectives. Students have a positive perception that they agree with online learning amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic. They can adopt online learning too, although some students are neutral towards some of the statements from the questionnaire above and there are also some students who have negative perceptions that online learning makes them less understanding of the material given by the teacher. Therefore, these findings should be considered when developing online-based courses to maximize student effectiveness and productivity in the teaching and learning process. It is possible that, once the COVID-19 pandemic stops, we will continue to see improvements in the education system using online learning. Therefore, this research will be useful for further education researchers, emphasizing the online component in conducting the following research.

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