The Use of Smartphones in Improving the Students' Speaking Skill

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ABSTRACT

Technology has already had a significant impact on many aspects of life, including education. As a learning tool, the has become indispensable for implementation. The study's goal is to investigate how smartphones can assist students in improving their public speaking skills. The study employed classroom action research in three cycles. This study included 39 second-grade students from a junior high school in West Java. Interviews, observations, and questionnaires were used to collect qualitative data. Furthermore, quantitative data from speaking tests were obtained. According to the findings of this study, using a smartphone during a course activity can keep students' attention and interest. They also gained the confidence to speak up and actively participate in class. Furthermore, smartphones help students stay engaged while learning. The speaking test results revealed that the students' speaking abilities had improved. The mean score for students in cycle one was 70.4, 77.6 in cycle two, and 82.2 in cycle three. As a result, because smartphones are compatible with student characteristics, they can be used as a learning medium to assist students in improving their speaking skills, broadening their knowledge, and developing their other English practice.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability becomes crucial for students during the English Foreign language learning process, as it is one indicator that they have mastered the target language. Speaking is an interactive process of meaning construction that produces, receives, and processes information. Nevertheless, Brown (2007) stated that speaking is not just what people say that counts but how they say it and what people deliver with body language, gesture, eye contact, and other non-verbal messages when social contact in interactive language function. Various approaches have been applied to increase students speaking skill performance in the English Foreign Language. To teach speaking, students should be facilitated. It is

expected to stimulate them and help their confidence and others. It is a two-way process involving the productive and receptive skills of understanding.

As well, the 2013 curriculum defines the goal of learning English as to develop the student's potential to have communicative competence in interpersonal, transactional, and functional written and spoken forms. Based on this concept, it is understood that speaking allows people to communicate or express what they want to understand one another. As a result, teachers must provide as many opportunities as possible for students to improve their speaking skills. On the other hand, students had to learn pronunciation, grammar rules, and vocabulary to speak fluently. Grammar is required for students to construct correct sentences and conversations, whereas pronunciation produces easily understandable articulation (Monika, Winarti, & Yundayani, 2019). As Derakhsan, Khalili, & Behesti (2016) stated, speaking skill comprises accuracy and fluency. Accuracy is also gained through vocabulary mastery, where appropriate words are used in appropriate contexts. Sometimes students use words or expressions in different contexts that do not mean the same thing. As a result, students should be able to use words or expressions correctly. While fluency is a primary goal in many communicative language courses, accuracy is achieved by allowing students to concentrate on phonology, grammar, and discourse in their spoken output. The statement implies that speaking fluency and accuracy are both critical.

Unfortunately, some issues exist in the teaching-learning process. There are still many students who have poor communication skills. The students remained silent because they did not know what to say. They have difficulty expressing their ideas and opinions verbally because they are afraid of making mistakes and lack confidence in speaking English Yundayani & Kardijan (2018). They also speak slowly and take an excessive amount of time composing utterances. They still had trouble pronouncing some English words. Following that, they made numerous grammatical and vocabulary errors while speaking English. Then there was a lack of motivation in the learning activity because the teacher only asked and answered questions, so the students were uninterested and bored.

To help students improve their speaking skills, the teacher should employ any available strategies, including media use. A smartphone with the internet can do many things and has some features to help students with their tasks in and out of the classroom, such as sending an email, browsing the internet, video chatting, Etc. It has both advantages and disadvantages. Smartphones can be used to learn in various ways, including learning through sound, short text messages, a graphical display, data, an internet search, and the camera and video clips (Sevari, 2012). It could be due to time constraints, classroom facilities, or a lack of language application in daily life. As a result, many people try to find specific methods or tools that can be used to encourage students to speak up. A smartphone is one of them.

Smartphones and mobile technology have a significant role in education. They have many functions as learning tools, such as YouTube, video, electric dictionary, etc. They can motivate and stimulate students to improve student's English ability (Mahmud, 2018; Wheng & Chen, 2015). That is why it is expected that students can understand and enhance technology mastery of smartphone usage in the teaching and learning activities. Smartphones bring both benefits and challenges. Smartphones with internet connectivity can search thousands of web pages and provide a high degree of accuracy to the reader. They almost replace reference books and avoid the physical labor of visiting the university library. Despite their effectiveness in gathering information for classroom assignments, some teachers and parents may not encourage their children or students to use mobile phones in the classroom.

Some educational institutions worldwide have banned smartphones during regular college and class hours. Over-reliance on mobile devices may prevent students from activating cognitive skills such as brainstorming and recall required for creativity. Students may not find it necessary to store information in their minds because they can access it quickly on their mobile devices. Additionally, information that would otherwise be stored in the students' heads is instead saved on the memory cards of their smartphones. In some situations, students can look at things in a more fun way than going to book all the time. According to Masiu & Chukwuere (2018), smartphones have extensively spread due to their exciting features: accessing emails, biometrics, social media platforms, etc. The availability of free language

learning software programs, portability, speed, audio output, and visual features in the latest smartphones makes it an essential tool for EFL students to learn English.

Smartphones are used for more than just making phone calls and sending text messages. Pocket phones have evolved into multifunctional devices in recent years. Many children and adolescents use mobile devices to take pictures and videos, listen to music, play games, and record their activities. Unfortunately, many schools prohibit mobile phones due to the disruption they cause. The smartphone is now much more than a phone in technical and social terms. The smartphone is an essential part of everyday life and growing up in general for school-age young people. Buchegger (2010) offered some ideas for actively and creatively using smartphones in the classroom. The suggestion covers a wide range of topics and areas where this technology can be used creatively. The following are some examples of how to use the smartphone for creative learning in class: mobile photo story, mobile video story, mobile podcast, mobile application, mobile GPS, mobile interfaces, SMS language, SMS passage, standard geometrical forms, Documenting a field trip, mobile record story, QR Codes, Digital Flickr book, and SMS poetry. Smartphones can provide students with great ideas for being creative and productive with them in class. The suggestion covers a wide range of topics and areas where this technology can be used creatively.

The study sees the improvement of students' speaking skills using smartphones. The researcher would implement smartphones in the teaching and learning activity where previously the researcher gave a specific link to the website. After that, the students used the link to access a video about teaching material. They would study the material while finding the problematic words in the text; then, they could access Google Translate to know the meaning of words or how they pronounce words. Using smartphones in teaching speaking helps students encourage and support them to speak and express their ideas. Smartphones have many features that make it easy for students to find the meaning of vocabulary and get the way to pronounce it. Besides, the students may study and imitate the expressions through the video they access on smartphones. Smartphones can encourage and stimulate students to express their idea. By implementing this way, smartphones are expected to solve problems and help to improve the student's speaking skills.

The teaching-learning process is aided in this study when students learn through self-correction. Students will become more self-sufficient, autonomous, and confident as a result. In this method, teachers must make students rely on themselves. Students can practice a simple dialogue directly or record their conversation, and the teacher will ask for the learning outcome to evaluate the teaching-learning activity. As a result, students are expected to be responsible for their words or utterances. Besides, the teacher gives students access to a website to find a specific video about English conversation. According to the above explanation, the researcher intends to promote students' speaking skills through smartphones. In particular, two questions are addressed in this study: How the use of smartphones improves students speaking skills and how the students' speaking skills improve through the use of a smartphone.

2. METHODS

Classroom Action Research was used to carry out the study. It is a technique for figuring out how to solve problems. This study used an action research method, with the four stages of Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) model as a spiral of steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This model was further developed by Kemmis & McTaggart, & Nixon (2014) into the spiral of self-reflective thinking. According to Matters, Fox & Hunn (2009:20), the respondent may interpret the question in their way in open-ended questions. A research policy covers searching literature, taking the respondents, giving the questionnaires, and analyzing and interpreting the questionnaire.

Thirty-nine second-grade students from a junior high school in West Java participated in the study. This study gathered both qualitative and quantitative information. Interviews, observations, and a questionnaire were used to collect qualitative data. Meanwhile, the results of speaking tests were used to obtain quantitative data. This classroom action research took place during the first 2019/2020, from September to November. The action research design had been planned before it was put into action. Field

observation and lesson planning, and observation sheet, a field note and interview guideline, an action research schedule, and achievement criteria and targets were all part of the design of the action research plan.

During the planning stage, the researcher began identifying some problems that appeared in the teaching-learning activity, so the researcher took steps to solve the problems and discussed the use of smartphones as media to bring about improvement, in this case, to improve the student's speaking skills. Among the expected gains were smartphones as media in the teaching-learning process, smartphone-based activity to improve students' speaking skills, providing feedback on students' performance, acquainting students with access to dictionaries, and providing daily handout materials. During this phase, the researcher created a lesson plan to aid in the process's success.

As constructed steps, the research implemented smartphones as media of the teaching-learning process during this action phase. In each cycle, the research activities were carried out for two meetings. The researcher devised a topic for the research activity, which used smartphone media. The theme was a recount text in which students were expected to tell about their past experiences. As a result, the researcher devised a strategy for organizing the learning activity. The steps involved the teacher instructing the students to use specific links on the internet to locate the recount text as a model for practicing speaking. After discovering the link, the students carefully observed and paid attention to the recount text in the video. The teacher allowed the students to discuss the expressions used in the conversation. The teacher assigned the students to write a recount text based on their prior experience. The students practiced speaking in front of the class, and the teacher graded them on their fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and accuracy.

While conducting the teaching-learning process, the researcher also gathered information about classroom observation. The technique was used during preliminary research and the action stage. The researcher recorded the event as data or information to decide what to do in the next cycle. The activity was carried out when the researcher had finished observing the teaching and learning process. This activity could discuss observations made by a collaborator with a teacher (researcher). This stage was central to class action research because collaborators revealed what they thought went well and what did not go well when researchers managed the learning process.

The success criteria in this study were comparing scores before and after treatments. The learning improvement was considered successful if the students achieved a higher score on the speaking test of 75 (seventy-five) as the minimum mastery criterion, which was achieved by more than three-quarters (3/4) of the students after smartphone implementation on teaching students speaking skills. On the other hand, there was another criterion for determining the success: the research made the instructional environment a joyful learning experience to motivate students to engage in long-term self-learning.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Thus, every action research cycle had its own goals, but they all improved students' speaking abilities using smartphones as remedies. Each cycle's speaking assessment included fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension components. In each cycle, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting were the steps of action research, and the data were gathered from various sources.

The use of smartphones in improving students speaking skills

The use of smartphone-based learning led to the creation of a new paradigm known as mobile learning, which has the potential to improve teaching and learning processes. Smartphones have a few features to use in various ways to facilitate teaching and learning of English. The advantages of using Smartphones, for example, dictionary applications, are to look up the meanings of new words and check out the pronunciation and spelling of unfamiliar words (Turgay and Gurluyer, 2017). The favorable outcomes can be attributed to state-of-the-art features available on smartphones that allow learners to watch the video, look up words in offline or online dictionaries, read or write online

platforms, listen to songs or tracks, do language exercises, or test their language skills and other features.

The researcher implemented smartphones as learning media in each cycle during the teaching-learning activity in the study. The researcher initiated the instruction by giving them a link to access the material they studied. The students accessed the internet through their smartphones based on a link given, link https://www.powtoon.com/online-presentation/ and https://recount. The links contained a video, both written and spoken text, to lead them to understand the recount text. Besides, smartphone-enabled the students to explore knowledge about recounting text used to improve their speaking skills.

Smartphones encourage microlearning for the employed and unemployed to advance knowledge and skills (Emerson & Berge, 2018). Some smartphone features, such as videos from YouTube, a popular media used by the millennial generation, aided students. If the video was genuinely relevant to the subject being discussed, it was an effective tool to enhance the learning experience. Moreover, it was used to help students improve their English speaking skills (Riswandi, 2016) and is also crucial in terms of English speaking skills during the online learning process (Albahlal & Albahlal, 2019). Furthermore, Google Translate was used as a tool in the learning process to translate words and provide translation variations for the specific word. Because it had an audio button, it also taught students how to pronounce words in either the source or target language correctly. A native speaker's recorded voice pronounced the word and read out the entire sentence when the students pressed the button. Dictionaries greatly help language learners increase their language skills or knowledge such as phonetics, pronunciation, word roots, grammar, and register, besides providing the meaning of the searched vocabulary item (Bishop, 2000: Chan, 2011). Dictionaries could lead language learners to understand a word by word translation or explanations, dictionaries with language-related information can assist them in the foreign language learning process.

Students' speaking skills gradually improved due to their intensive use of smartphones. Learning through sound, learning through short text messages, learning through a graphical display, learning through information obtained from data, learning through an internet search, and learning through the camera and video clips were all mentioned by Sevari (2012). Students were ecstatic. The use of a smartphone allowed students to participate in the teaching-learning process. They were motivated and stimulated to speak due to videos on their smartphone.

Furthermore, according to Almurasih (2016), Youtube videos are powerful in teaching the English language in classrooms as supplementary material. As a result, the students' feedback was quite positive. Youtube could enhance their understanding. The English lesson on Youtube was helpful and exciting. It could motivate and increase the learners' interest in identifying a topic. The video was the best way to capture the movements of athletes or animals. As a result, the learners participated in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the students were not shy and could express their ideas freely.

The students speaking skills improved through the use of smartphone

The purpose of assessing students' speaking abilities was to evaluate the results of students' work at the end of each cycle to the previous one. The student's ability to perform a speaking skill that focuses on fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension gradually improved the evaluated skill. Each cycle, the researchers conducted speaking tests to determine the students' speaking ability scores. The researchers used investigator triangulation to keep track of the scoring activities. It was inter-rater reliability that ensured the data was trustworthy. The researchers, the English teacher, and the peer collaborators participated in the activities.

Speaking Cycle I Cycle II Cycle III Components Treatment Treatment Treatment 79 69 82 Fluency Pronunciation 71 73 81 Grammar 68 74 76 Vocabulary 72 85 86 72 77 Comprehension 86 Mean Score 70.4 77.6 82.2

Table 1. Improvement of students' speaking skills in each speaking component

Table 1 depicts how students' speaking skills improved from cycle 1 to cycle 3 due to the treatments used during this action research. In the first cycle, the student's speaking ability was still lacking. In the linguistic aspect of the test, the students scored an average of 70.4. It fell short of the minimum mastery requirement of 75 points. The second research cycle began with applying some treatments using a Smartphone. In cycle 2, the test result showed an increase in score from 70.4 to 77.6. The student's speaking ability improved over time until they met the minimum mastery requirements. The outcome of the reflection revealed that treatment was still necessary. The third cycle's speaking test revealed a mean score of 82.2 after treatment with the smartphone was used. The use of smartphones could improve the students' speaking skills through speaking aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and accuracy. Most of the students achieved higher scores than the minimum mastery criteria. To the result of the speaking test above, there are improvements in students' speaking skills in each cycle. Therefore, the smartphone is a media that can improve the students' Speaking Skills.

The students' speaking improvement was assessed through a speaking test, observation, and interview to determine how the students felt and reacted to using a smartphone.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions Related to the Use of Smartphones in Improving Speaking skills

Strongly	Agree	Strongly	Disagree
Agree		Disagree	
(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
25	75	0	0
e	07		
U	07	0	13
t			
26	69	5	0
3	26	0	0
64	36	U	0
33.5	46	0	20.5
	Agree (%) 25 0 t 26 64	Agree (%) (%) 25 75 e 0 87 t 26 69 6 64 36	Agree (%) (%) (%) (%) 25 75 0 e 0 87 0 t 26 69 5 6 64 36 0

According to Table 2, 75% of students believe that using a Smartphone as learning tool assisted them in overcoming their speaking difficulties. Furthermore, using a smartphone encouraged 87% of

students to improve their communication skills, and smartphone applications are convenient strategies for more than 90% of students in achieving their overall speaking performance. This finding expressed students feeling of motivation through the use of the smartphone. Buchegger (2010) and Yassei (2012) stated that video is helpful in the teaching and learning activity through designing exciting visuals and an exceptional interactive environment in English Foreign Language or English Second language classroom, seeing language –in-use, raising cross-culture awareness, developing the power of creation, or increasing learners' motivation. Watching videos through smartphones and students are expected to decrease their anxiety about practicing the target language and enhance their proficiency and knowledge.

Teachers found that teachers significantly affected students' achievement when they provided strategies for improving their speech. Smartphones can be one of the learning resources and increase students' competency to their capacity (Kuswandi, Surahman, Thaariq, &Muthmainah, 2018; Surahman, Kuswandi, Wedi, & Thaariq, 2019). They may enhance their oratory skills by making a smartphone part of the teaching process. Students were responsible for making meaningful contributions during the entire learning process. They were the majority of the ready and eager students to give a presentation in front of the entire class. Although they may have appeared otherwise, some of them needed to be added. After they got to know each other better, they gradually gained confidence in communicating in English effectively. In addition to that, their vocabulary increased, and their sentence expression became more complex than prior.

In addition, Table 2 described that all of the students agreed that smartphone applications are simple. Moreover, more than 70% of students discovered that authentic speaking materials could be obtained through Smartphone applications. Therefore, through the result of the study, smartphones have advantages in the teaching and learning process. English speaking learning can be carried out through online applications, namely videos on a website. Smartphone has made it easy for teachers to direct and guide students to improve their speaking skills. Additionally, online learning technologies play an essential role in improving learning situations as a new element framework for learners (Ellis & Bliuc, 2019).

Furthermore, researchers applied a semi-structured interview to get a deeper understanding of students' perception of the use of smartphones in teaching speaking.

Excerpt 1

R # 01: "Learning to speak English on a smartphone is **enjoyable** because of **the various features that make it easier for me to learn**, such as Google Translate, which can instantly translate difficult words and provide examples of how to pronounce them." Google translate is more technological and easy access to information. It also has much information such as word meaning, pronunciation, collocation, and some usage."

R # 02: "It is easier for me **to imitate pronunciation** because I can use my smartphone to listen to English audio and video material. It is **simple to use a smartphone** because of **all the available sources to find more reference material is greater." In this case, the smartphone could increase students' performance and give them benefit academically."**

R # 03: "Using a smartphone app helps me be more confident because they make me locate various learning resources more accessible with relative ease. I hope the school can provide free internet access, so I do not have to buy a data package." Based on the finding, It can be inferred that smartphones bring the positive capability to the users because smartphones are portable and connectivity. They can be connected and communicated with the

website using the wireless network of the device to access learning material ubiquitouosly, so learners have the opportunity to learn every time and everywhere they are."

(Interview transcript, Respondent # 01, # 02, and # 03, translated by the author)

According to the first excerpt, the majority of the students were enthusiastic. The use of a smartphone piques the students' interest in the teaching-learning process. They were motivated and stimulated to speak due to videos on their smartphone. The role of smartphones and mobile technologies in education must not be ignored (Tikoria and Agaria, 2017). Academic learning is now innovative due to smartphone and other media in promoting and advancing 21st century needed skills and knowledge (Tulenko & Bailey, 2013: Emerson & Berge, 2018).

Additionally, Mokoena (2012) states that smartphones improve learners' collaborative learning through their connection to the internet. The students participated in the instruction process.

Furthermore, the students were not shy and could express their ideas freely.

Moreover, the students made significant contributions during the instructional process. The majority of them were confident in their ability to deliver their speaking performance in front of the class. Even though some of them still appeared depending on the text. They gradually gained the confidence to speak English more fluently. They improved their pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatically deepened expression. Overall, smartphones were a form of media that allowed students to develop their abilities and expand their knowledge to achieve tremendous success, particularly in English speaking. According to Zahid Zufar At Taariq (2020), social media can facilitate access anywhere, anytime, and with anyone connected. It enables use for particular needs such as learning activity both teacher and learners.

In the age of rapid information development, smartphone technology offers learning resources that are very abundant and easily accessed. Smartphones with the internet are one of the learning resources inseparable from the search for knowledge (Lau et al., 2018). The invention of the mobile phone or smartphone technology thrives and brings in attitudinal changes in students, and most of them are affected, predominantly undergraduate students (Ezemeneka, 2013). It was also applied to an ever-expanding range of human activities and the environment in which we live. It brought both advantages and disadvantages. Smartphones with internet access can search thousands of web pages and provide the reader with highly accurate results. They almost wholly replaced reference books while avoiding the physical labor of going to the university library. Despite the effectiveness of mobile phones in gathering information for classroom assignments, some teachers and parents may not encourage their children or students to use them in the classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

Device mobility is excellent, and language learners today have many tools at their disposal for language learning. This phenomenon makes using smartphones more dependable, comfortable, and beneficial for speaking because it helps learners improve their English fluency, word accuracy, and fluency. This study was carried out to investigate the use of smartphones in improving students' speaking skills and learn how students' speaking skills improve due to smartphone use. The smartphone is one of the exciting media providing various features to support inclusive students from various learning styles, such as videos of youtube. Youtube has revolutionized the online platform.

Meanwhile, an electric dictionary could help how students comprehend word meaning, pronunciation, and collocations so that it helps to enhance students' skills to master the target language. Finally, EFL students understand how important speaking is for students and the practical role smartphone apps can play in improving students' oral skills.

Furthermore, students' perceptions were found to motivate teachers' practices positively. Even though there was still a lack of perfection in the research that was not yet solved, such as the ownership of smartphones for each student and signal network in rural areas, smartphones can be used as an alternative way to teach speaking. The study's result can be considered a reference for other researchers to conduct a similar research design or other English Skills.

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