

Enhancing of young learners' speaking achievement through the use of Facebook application: a case study in Indonesia



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Abstract This research aimed to investigate whether the Facebook application could enhance young learners' speaking achievement. The Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was employed in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used. The quantitative data were used to examine the young learners' speaking achievement scores, while the qualitative data were used to explore their situation in practicing their speaking skills. The findings indicate that the use of Facebook significantly improved young learners' speaking achievement, as evidenced by the mean score of the pre-test (48.46), post-test 1 (56.78), post-test 2 (63.34), and post-test 3 (67.53). Moreover, the percentage of young learners who achieved the minimum mastery criterion increased from 6.25% in the pre-test to 75% in the post-test 3. Based on the observation sheet, it was found that the young learners were enthusiastic, curious, and confident in practicing their English skills.

Keywords: classroom action research, Facebook, speaking achievement, young learners

1. Introduction

The form of growth or change in the individual, which is evidenced by known behavior resulting from experience and practice, is referred to as learning (Hamalik 1983). In educational institutions, technology is used to support learning activities (Tonduer et al 2012). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2003) reports that there has been a significant increase in internet access since 1999, with access at home increasing from 49% to 60%, and access in schools and classrooms increasing from 75% to 92%. Social media is a technology commonly used by people around the world. Social Networking Sites (SNS) are a type of social media that allow users to access digital information, interact and create content, and join communities in online platforms (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Facebook is the most popular SNS application, with 2.89 million users (Statista Research Department 2021).

While Facebook is commonly used for entertainment purposes, it can positively impact users, particularly in improving skills. Studies have shown that SNS, particularly Facebook, is a powerful digital tool that can have a positive impact on learning (Cook et al 2008). SNS and mobile learning allow learners to speak in less stressful situations, making SNS a successful medium for practicing English speaking skills in a fun way (Sun et al 2017). Previous studies have also investigated the use of Facebook as a media for improving students' academic achievement (Chang 2014; Celik, Yurt, and Sahin 2015; Junco 2015; Pebriana, Arifin and Novita 2015; Can 2016; Dweikat 2016; ElsayyedSanad 2016; González, Gasco and Llopis 2016; Moghavvemi et al 2017; AlSaleem 2018; Al Zboon, Ghammaz and Al Zboon 2018; Ekahitanond 2018; Habes et al 2018; Putri 2018; Goh et al 2019; Jassim and Dzakiria 2019; Kostikova et al 2019; Mathur et al 2019; Suganda 2019; Toker and Baturay 2019; Kholiq and Solehuddin 2020; Datko 2021; Kaso et al 2021; Ulla and Perales 2021; Mykytiuk et al 2022; Yotyodying et al 2022).

Delivering a message or expressing ideas through verbal or nonverbal communication is encompassed in the act of speaking (Chaney and Burk 1998). In order to effectively convey a message, individuals need to have a comprehensive understanding of five components, including grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. Nevertheless, practicing speaking skills in English can present challenges, particularly for young learners who are often hindered by a limited vocabulary, confusion over grammar, and a fear of expressing their thoughts in English, leading to shyness and a lack of confidence (Marleni and Asilestari 2018). In response to these challenges, creative learning activities and media use are essential for supporting the development of English speaking skills in students. Prior research has demonstrated that Facebook is an effective tool for improving the English speaking skills of undergraduate students in Malaysia (Kabilan et al 2010). The interesting features of Facebook make it an ideal platform for improving speaking skills and encourage students to express



their thoughts freely. In this study, a case study approach was taken to improve the English-speaking skills of Junior High School students who experienced speaking problems. The research found that students felt disinterested and unexcited about learning, had poor speaking skills, and lacked the confidence to speak up. Consequently, the study aimed to investigate whether the use of the Facebook application could significantly enhance young learners' English speaking skills.

2. Methodology

The research design employed in this study was classroom action research (CAR), a method used to identify changes or improvements in practices through cyclical processes. Four stages were used in CAR, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Figure 1). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, the acting and keeping stages were conducted online. During the planning phase, the researchers assessed the participants' English-speaking skills, including the materials, instructional materials, pictures, and video materials on Facebook as the media, the observing sheet, scoring, and attendance list. In the acting phase, the researchers implemented the prepared plan. The observing phase involved monitoring the participants' improvement during the study. During the reflecting stage, the researcher and the collaborator discussed the weaknesses observed during the action and analyzed the results of the data, which included the observation sheet and tests used to assess the participants' improvement in each cycle. The researchers then concluded the results of the young learners' improvement.

The study comprised three cycles, and the Facebook application was used to teach the respondents. Each cycle consisted of three meetings, and the participants were Junior High School students, specifically grade VII-6 at SMP Negeri 1 Pangkalan Susu, comprising 32 students. The material taught was asking and giving opinions, and the test questions were adapted from the discussion between the researcher and the observer. The speaking test and observation sheet were the instruments used in the study. The research analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were analyzed using the speaking test score as the primary data. The rubrics for scoring the speaking test covered pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and the respondents were required to achieve a score equal to or over 65. The success criteria were that 75% of young learners should pass the test using the rubric scoring method by Brown (2004). The qualitative data were analyzed using the observation sheet. The content validity of the test was ensured, and the inter-rater reliability was used to obtain the data's reliability.

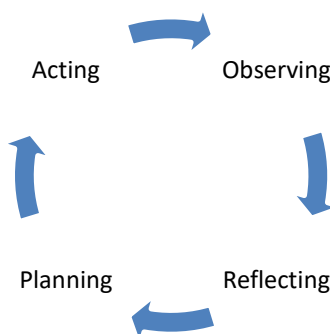


Figure 1 Kurt Lewin's action research design

3. Results

Two instruments were utilized in the study, namely, the test and observation. In the test instrument, the students' speaking skills were evaluated using a pre-test in the first meeting and a post-test after the third cycle. Three cycles were employed to ensure that the minimum mastery criterion was achieved. On the other hand, the observation sheet was utilized to monitor the teaching-learning process. In this section, an overview of the research results after the implementation of the intervention is provided.

During the pre-cycle, oral tests were administered to the young learners, and the mean score obtained was 48.46. The results showed that the students had weak pronunciation, limited vocabulary, difficulties in grammar usage, and lacked confidence in public speaking. Only two respondents attained a score of 65, with the class mean score being 48.46, as presented in Table 1.

Cycle I aimed to improve the students' pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and confidence in expressing opinions by utilizing Facebook. The young learners were requested to join a Facebook group created by the researcher. The mean score for Cycle I or post-test 1 was 56.78, which did not reach the KKM score of 65. The reflection on this cycle indicated that the students still had difficulties with Simple Tenses, which were addressed in Cycle II.

Cycle II focused on improving the students' grammar, specifically in Simple Tenses. The material provided included simple present, past, and future tenses. The mean score of the young learners was 63.34, which still did not attain the KKM score of 65. The reflection on Cycle II indicated that the pronunciation and grammar improved, but new methods were needed to enhance vocabulary in sentence construction.

The objective of Cycle III was to enrich the young learners' vocabulary by utilizing games, videos, or pictures on Facebook. The students learned through games available on Facebook to improve their vocabulary. The mean score obtained by the class was 67.53, indicating that they successfully achieved the KKM score of over 65. The reflection on Cycle III indicated that the students successfully practiced their English speaking skills and gradually reduced errors through Facebook as a medium.

Table 1 The young learners' mean scores from pre-cycle to cycle III.

Test	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
Pre-test	48.46			
Post-test		56.78	63.34	67.53

The data showed that Facebook improved the young learners' enthusiasm in learning English, especially in improving their speaking skills. Table 2 below illustrates that the students were confident in enhancing their English speaking skills.

Table 2 The young learners' mean scores from pre-cycle to cycle III.

No	Activity	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	Not interrupt friends during teaching-learning process	87.5%	93.75%	93.75%
2	Pay attention of the explanation	93.75%	93.75%	100%
3	Active to respond	31.25%	62.5%	62.5%
4	Active in giving opinion	31.25%	62.5%	62.5%
5	Doing discussion in partner group	93.75%	100%	100%
6	Asking the question	9.3%	31.25%	31.25%
7	Doing the task	87.5%	100%	100%

The observation sheet was used to support the primary data, and was used as secondary data. The improvement of young learners' activity in practicing English speaking skills through Facebook was observed during cycle I to cycle III. It was observed that some young learners interrupted and did not respect their friends, and laughed at their peers' mistakes. However, there was an improvement in this aspect, as seen in the observation sheet. In cycle I, the percentage was 87.5%, which improved to 93.75% in cycle III. Additionally, the young learners paid attention to the researcher or teacher explanation, which was reflected in the percentage of cycle I, which was 93.75% (30 young learners) and improved to 100% (32 young learners) in cycle III. The young learners also responded to the researcher or teacher and provided their opinions about the material, which showed an improvement from cycle I (31.25% or 10 young learners) to cycle III (62.5% or 20 young learners). In order to practice English speaking skills, the young learners discussed and had conversations with their own group, which was presented in the observation sheet. In cycle I, the percentage was 93.75% (30 young learners), which improved to 100% (32 young learners) in cycle III.

Furthermore, the young learners actively asked questions to the teacher when they did not understand the material. The improvement was reflected from cycle I, which had 3 young learners (9.3%), to cycle II and cycle III, which had 10 or 31.25% of young learners who were active. Lastly, the young learners did the tasks, especially for practice, pre-test and post-test. The observation sheet showed that in cycle I, 28 young learners (87.5%) did the tasks, and this improved to 32 or 100% of young learners in cycle II and cycle III.

4. Discussion

In this section, the improvement of the young learners in Grade VII-6 in terms of score and situation in teaching learning process from pre-cycle to cycle III was presented. During the pre-cycle, the successful criteria of 75% young learners passing the test was not achieved, with only 6.25% passing. In cycle II, the young learners learned about "Asking and Giving Opinion" to practice their English speaking skills by reading and watching posts in a Facebook group created by the researcher. In post-test 1, there was an improvement of 17.16% from pre-test, with 21.87% young learners passing the test. The treatment continued in cycle II, leading to a further improvement in post-test 2, with 50% or 16 young learners passing the test, and a 30.7% improvement from pre-test. However, the successful criteria of 75% was still not achieved in cycle II, so it was continued to Cycle III, where the passing rate increased to 75%, with 24 young learners passing the speaking test. Therefore, in this cycle, the successful criteria of 75% was achieved, and the process of CAR was stopped until Cycle III, with an improvement of 39.35% from pre-test to post-test III.

In the pre-cycle, the young learners lacked confidence in practicing their English speaking skills due to problems with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, shyness, and anxiety. To overcome these problems, they learned and practiced through Facebook. The observation sheet showed that they became more active, disciplined, and enthusiastic in practicing their speaking skills during the research. The features on Facebook, such as Facebook video, pictures, status, group, and game, also helped the young learners. They became confident in improving their English speaking skills through Facebook because they did not need to see people in front of them, which made them more creative.

This study is relevant to the findings of some previous studies. For instance, Jafar, S.A. (2012) in Malaysia found that using Facebook as a tool for language learning led to significant improvements in the speaking proficiency of young learners. Another study by Gudykunst and Kim (2009) in the United States found that using Facebook to practice speaking in a foreign language can lead to more effective communication among students. Similarly, in Indonesia, a study by Pratiwi (2018) found that using Facebook in English language classes improved the speaking skills of high school students. In conclusion, using Facebook as a tool for language learning can improve students' speaking achievement, especially in young learners.

5. Conclusions

It was found in this research that the English speaking skill of young learners was significantly improved by the Facebook application. Enthusiasm, enjoyment, and excitement in learning were observed among the young learners who received treatment through Facebook. The features of Facebook, including picture, video, group, and game, provided a conducive learning environment. Moreover, the young learners felt more confident in practicing speaking skills through Facebook, as they were free to express themselves without being physically present in front of an audience.

The results showed a significant improvement in the young learners' percentage improvement in each cycle, as observed in the pre-test (6.25%), post-test 1 (21.87%), post-test 2 (50%), and post-test 3 (75%). It was evident that the young learners consistently practiced their English speaking skills, leading to a marked improvement. In conclusion, this research demonstrated that Facebook could support the teaching and learning process of young learners, particularly in enhancing speaking skills. It is suggested that further studies explore the potential of technology, such as video conferencing, virtual reality, and online language learning platforms, in improving the teaching and learning of speaking skills.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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