

Enhancing Students' Speaking Fluency Through Conversation Practice: Students' Voices

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Abstract

Speaking fluency is a very important skill that must be mastered. Students' fluency in speaking can help them develop courage and confidence in interacting well with other people using English. This research aims to identify things that influence students' enthusiasm in conversation practice to improve their speaking proficiency. This research method is descriptive qualitative, using data collection techniques by distributing questionnaires to respondents to answer. The subjects of this research were second-semester students majoring in English education at Muhammadiyah University, Semarang. The results show that factors such as an interesting classroom atmosphere using practical practices that make the material interesting can increase students' enthusiasm in improving their speaking skills. This research provides important knowledge to create the development of more effective learning methods.

Keywords: speaking fluency, students', interesting

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is so that you can communicate with many people from various worlds. That way, to master English we have to try to learn it. Using English correctly means not only mastering what you read but also understanding what you hear and say. Effective English learning will help the English language development process for each student. It is not easy to master fluent English that quickly, because we live in an environment where English is not used as a means of communication daily (garryn & goldatung 2018). Meanwhile, other students who are in America, England, or other countries live in an environment where English is used as a means of communication with other people every day. Nowadays, the ability to speak English is a skill that today's young people must master. How could it not be, that English is a universal language, a language used by almost the whole world. In this era of globalization, everything is sophisticated and instant. Nowadays, English is used everywhere, such as at work or in social life. Therefore, English language skills must be improved.

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The ability to use English well and correctly requires quite a long process and time to master it. However, this way, basic skills can be learned in a short time. Basic skills that can be learned by everyone easily and quickly according to the person's ability to understand. The comprehension ability of each student is also different, this is a process and challenge in learning English. However, this makes many children not like English children for various reasons. The English learning process must be developed and more varied so that students do not feel bored during the learning process.

When someone speaks English fluently, it is often considered an achievement in learning English. English as a second language is not easy to master quickly. Speaking fluency play an important role as a means for students to convey ideas or opinions. Therefore, improving speaking fluency in English is an effort to enhance students' English proficiency. However, students vary in their ability to master material quickly; the existence of this gap poses a challenge for educators and students. One method that can be used is incorporating English in the teaching and learning process or applying it in everyday life. By getting used to using English, it will be easier for someone to speak English fluently. However, speaking skills that can be improved through conversation are not limited to just conversing. Speaking fluency facilitates communication between speakers and listeners. Speakers can foster positive social interaction with their listeners by sharing information (Aulia et al., 2021). A good conversation is one that is simple, detailed, on-topic, and most importantly, the language used can be understood by the interlocutor, allowing them to ask questions and provide answers.

English language itself. Therefore, speaking English does not only mean the meaning of each vocabulary. Such as informal language or what is often referred to as slang that cannot be searched in the dictionary. In this case, students can improve their knowledge and ability to speak English by often practicing in the form of conversations using English. Mastering English will deepen our understanding of the world by allowing us to easily translate books and the internet (Prayudha S & Pradana, 2023). Conversational training which is often carried out using English, will help students in adding insight into vocabulary that can be used when communicating daily. Conversation practice is done so that learning in English can make students feel enjoy, happy, and comfortable while learning English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking skills are one of the very important skills that must be mastered. Speaking skills are one of the four language skills. Through speaking skills can also help in conveying thoughts, ideas, opinions, ideas and expressing the contents of the heart in the form of speech or oral (Aisah et al., 2023; Anggraeni & Faqihuddin Assafary, 2020; Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Miranda & Wahyudin, 2023; Riza & Setyarini, 2020; Susilowati et al., 2017). That way, the ability to speak is something that must be mastered, especially for people who want to learn English. In addition, the ability to speak is a basic tool for communicating with other people even in various parts of the world and it is also a skill that will always be owned. Mastering the ability to speak is not just being able to speak, there are so many things that must be considered when

learning speaking skills. In this case, several things must be considered when speaking, such as understanding articulations, intonations, and also pronunciations appropriately. We also need to learn from the grammar used, the pronunciation process, and the correct pronunciation.

Communicating well is if we can make the listener understand and not be confused by what we say while talking. Conversation can help students develop their speaking skills. Through the conversation process, a lot of experience will be gained, such as new vocabulary, and can also be directly involved with other people in the conversation. The more often this conversation practice is carried out, it will help students in the process of learning speaking skills. Students will become accustomed to the process of interacting with others. That way, students will continue to learn and correct any mistakes in intonation or the use of language itself. Conversation training can also help students develop understanding, which is also very important in the process of speaking skills.

2.1.1 The Importance of Speaking

Speaking skills are one of the very important skills that must be mastered. Speaking skills are one of the four language skills. Through speaking skills can also help in conveying thoughts, ideas, opinions, ideas and expressing the contents of the heart in the form of speech or oral (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022; Dwiyanitini, 2023; Farhanah Pratiwi & Ayu, 2020; Maji et al., 2022). That way, the ability to speak is something that must be mastered, especially for people who want to learn English. In addition, the ability to speak is a basic tool for communicating with other people even in various parts of the world and it is also a skill that will always be owned. Mastering the ability to speak is not just being able to speak, there are so many things that must be considered when learning speaking skills. In this case, several things must be considered when speaking, such as understanding articulations, intonations, and also pronunciations appropriately. We also need to learn from the grammar used, the pronunciation process, and the correct pronunciation.

These speaking fluency can also help students develop self-confidence and can also help open doors for opportunities in a wider career field or their education as well. Speaking skills, students can become more confident in interacting with others using English (Almubarakah & Arifani, 2021; Dana & Aminatun, 2022; Haliwanda, 2021; Maulana et al., 2020; Wijayatiningsih et al., 2021). This can help students to interact well and effectively with others in various situations, such as in daily life or when presenting in public. In addition, speaking skills can improve thinking skills. The process when preparing a word to be used in a speech or presentation will involve the mind in organizing grammar. Therefore, speaking skills can help improve critical thinking skills.

Dialogue or what is known as conversation is a basic thing that must be mastered. Because through conversation we can exchange ideas, information, thoughts, and some others. Everyday conversations are different from conversations used in other professional situations. The type of conversation itself is divided into three, namely, first, structural conversation, where this type of conversation pays attention to grammar and the use of various structures in sentences must be correct. This conversation is usually used in professional situations (Arroba & Acosta, 2021; Aulia et al., 2021; Kassem, 2018; Marzuki et al., 2022; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). The second, functional conversation is used in formal situations where the use of language must be appropriate to the place and according to its existence, this is to build a person's ability to use the language. Lastly, situational conversation is used in communication based on informal situations. This conversation helps someone to recognize the function of

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language based on situations (Gaffney & Kerckmar, 2016; Jupri et al., 2022; Mulyadi et al., 2021; Ningsih et al., 2019; Rani Ligar Fitriani, 2022; Riyanti et al., 2019; Thi & Oanh, 2021; Tiawati et al., 2022). Therefore, frequent conversation practice can increase the ability to recognize each use of language in various conditions or circumstances and can further improve fluency and use of the English language. By mastering conversation in English, it will be easier to master other things, such as listening to music and watching films with English subtitles. Because English conversation is an important component that must be mastered to communicate with foreigners.

3. METHODS

The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method. This research focused on observing and analyzing students' enthusiasm for conversational practice to improve English fluency. This approach was chosen to obtain perceptions and measure students' enthusiasm regarding conversational practice in the language learning context. The participants in this research were 30 students from the second semester of the English language education department at Muhammadiyah University, Semarang. These participants were chosen because they had learned about previous conversations. This research focuses on finding out students' enthusiasm for the conversation practices they had received while studying.

The instrument used in collecting this data was a questionnaire which was then answered by the respondent. This questionnaire was designed to obtain data about students' perceptions of conversation practice which could influence their speaking fluency in English and could collect data to measure their enthusiasm for conversation practice to improve their speaking skills in English.

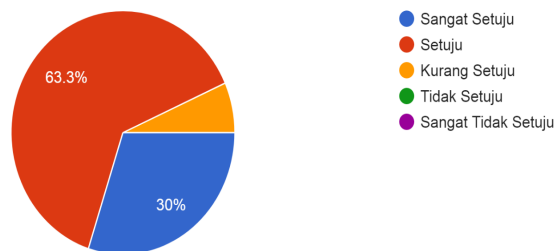
4. RESULTS

This research shows that students had enthusiasm for improving fluency in speaking English and also increased students' self-confidence when speaking English. This could be seen from the results of the questionnaire that I distributed to second-semester students majoring in English education at Muhammadiyah University, Semarang.

4.1 Cultivate a Sense of Enthusiasm

Based on the data found, 63.3% said they agreed, 30% said they strongly agreed with the statement below, and the remaining 6.7% said they disagreed.

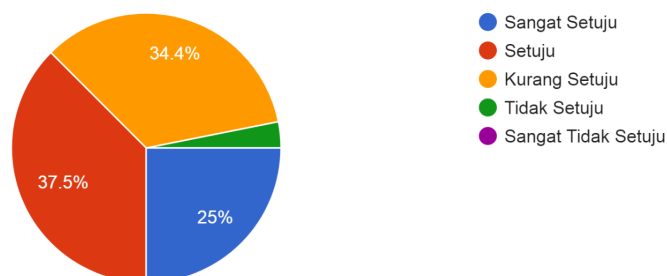
Saya selalu bersemangat ketika akan mengikuti kelas speaking
30 responses



4.2 Increase Self Confidence in Students'

In the next statement, as many as 37.5% said they agreed that it could increase self-confidence, and 34.4% said they disagreed, and 25% said they strongly agreed, the remaining 3.1% said they disagreed with the statement

Saya merasa percaya diri ketika mengerjakan soal yang berkaitan dengan praktik conversation yang sebelumnya telah dilakukan
30 responses

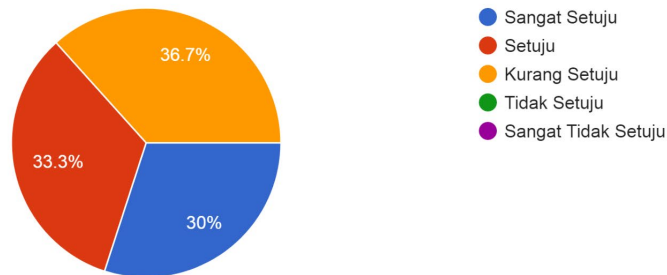


4.3 Actively Taking Part in Speaking Classes

The statement below shows that 36.7% disagree, 33.3% agree, and the remaining 30% strongly agree with the statement that students are active in taking speaking classes.

Selalu aktif dalam mengikuti kelas speaking

30 responses

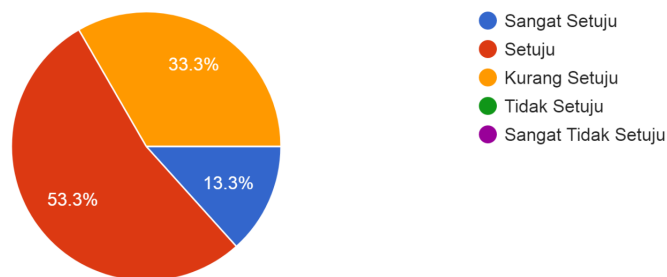


4.4 Feel Sad If You don't Get The Opportunity to Speak When Taking a Speaking Class

From the statement below, it shows that 53.3% said they agreed with the statement, and 33.3% said they disagreed, the remaining 13.3% said they strongly agreed with the statement below.

Saya cukup sedih ketika saya tidak mendapatkan kesempatan untuk berbicara ketika kelas speaking berlangsung

30 responses

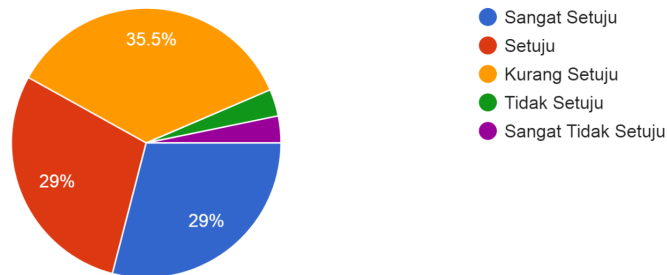


4.5 Feel Afraid When Appointed to Speak in Front of Many People

Of this statement, as many as 35.5% said they did not agree, and 29% said they agreed, another 29% said they strongly agreed, and the remaining 3.2% said they disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Cenderung takut ketika ditunjuk untuk berbicara didepan orang banyak

30 responses

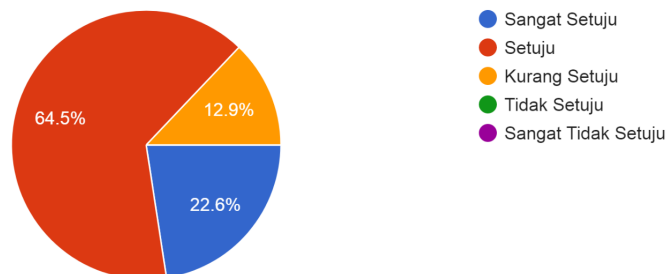


4.6. Always Have The Courage to Ask If There is Something You don't Understand

The results showed that as many as 64.5% said they agreed with this statement, 22.6% said they strongly agreed, and the remaining 12.9% said they disagreed with the statement.

Saya selalu bertanya ketika menemukan istilah bahasa asing yang tidak familier

30 responses

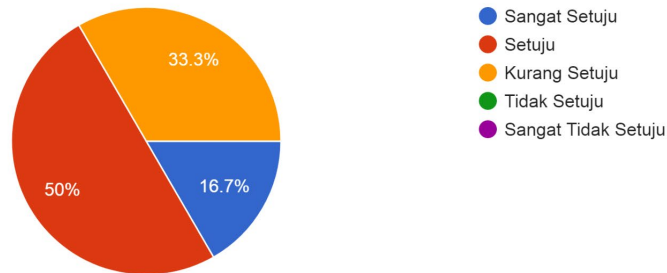


4.7. Always Practice Conversation Even Outside of Class

The results below show that as many as 50% said they agreed with the statement, and 33.3% said they disagreed, and the remaining 16.7% said they strongly agreed with the statement.

Saya selalu berlatih conversation diluar jam pembelajaran

30 responses

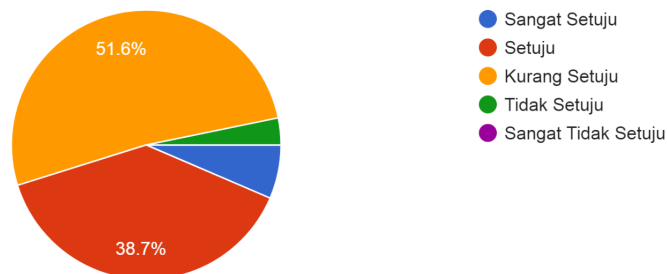


4.8. The Language Used Is Good and Easy to Understand

The results showed that 51.6% said they disagreed, and 38.7% said they agreed with this statement, and 6.5% said they strongly agreed, the remaining 3.2% said they disagreed.

Ketika saya berbicara bahasa inggris, bahasa yang saya gunakan cukup baik dan mudah dimengerti

30 responses

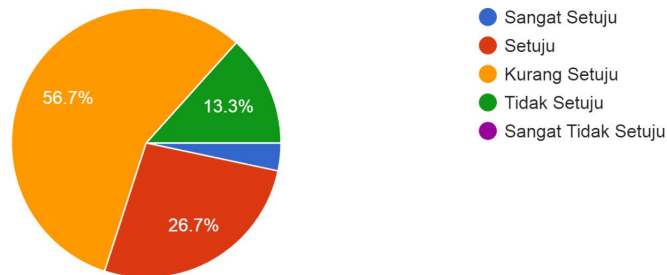


4.9. Able to Speak English for Quite a Long Time

From this statement, the results showed that as many as 56.7% said they disagreed with the statement, 26.7% said they agreed, then 13.3% said they disagreed, and the remaining 3.3% said they strongly agreed with this statement.

Mampu berbicara bahasa inggris dengan durasi yang cukup panjang

30 responses

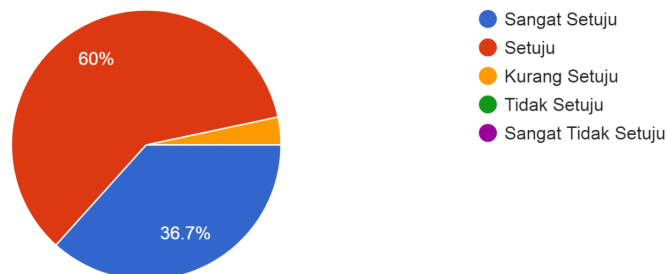


5.0. By frequently Practicing Conversation You Can Improve Your Speaking Skills

The results showed that as many as 60% agreed with the statement, 36.7% said they strongly agreed, and the remaining 3.3% said they disagreed with the statement.

Dengan sering berlatih conversation dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara

30 responses



5. DISCUSSION

This research aims to see how enthusiastic students are in carrying out conversational practice to improve their fluency when speaking English. The results of this research show that students' enthusiasm for carrying out conversations has an important influence on improving their English fluency. This is demonstrated by several things. First, students show high enthusiasm when during conversation activities and tend to be more enthusiastic in participating in the learning process. For example, students do not feel afraid when appointed to speak in front or carry out conversation practice during learning. Apart from that, students also feel more confident when working on questions related to previous conversations. This makes students feel less bored. The result is in line with the research from Aulia et al.(2021); Dana & Aminatun, (2022); Marzuki et al., (2022); & Zhang & Ardasheva (2019) Second, student enthusiasm also has an impact on the frequency of speaking practice. Students are more active and participate during activities and more active in discussions or other group activities. With this, students are more involved during the activity and this also

shows the results that students are very enthusiastic because they tend to be sad when they don't get the opportunity to speak when this conversation practice activity is carried out during class learning. This result is appropriate with Athoillah (2022); Aulia et al. (2021); & Marzuki et al., (2022). Students feel more comfortable while studying and are motivated to always practice conversation to improve their English fluency. Third, student enthusiasm shows results that can increase their self-confidence. This is shown by students who are more confident in trying to speak in any condition and anywhere and always try to use their language without focusing on their mistakes, but remain focused on communicating and practicing effectively. This result has the same result with (Nurjannah & Sudarwinoto, 2020; Rahman et al., 2022). Apart from that, student enthusiasm can also be seen in students' activeness in always asking questions when they encounter unfamiliar terms and students tend to increase their awareness to be more enthusiastic in practicing conversation practice outside of learning hours because this can increase fluency in English.

However, this research found several problems. Not all students have the same level of enthusiasm, and less enthusiastic students may be passive and afraid to participate. To overcome this, a more personal approach may be needed such as paying special attention to students who are less enthusiastic and looking for ways to arouse their interest. Overall, students' enthusiasm for conversation had a significant positive impact on their speaking fluency. Better speaking skills by creating an environment that supports and encourages student enthusiasm. Through active involvement of students in conversation, use of a large vocabulary, and increased self-confidence, students will achieve greater fluency and fluency in the language. Therefore, it is very important to create an environment that increases student enthusiasm, for example by creating relevant conversation topics or providing constructive and motivational feedback.

6. CONCLUSION

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that students' enthusiasm through conversation practice has a very significant influence on their fluency and speaking fluency. Conversation practice activities that are often carried out provide improvements in speaking skills and not only that but can also foster students' self-confidence when speaking English. Their enthusiasm is reflected in several things such as the courage to speak, the desire to always practice, always actively ask questions, and efforts to correct mistakes. In addition, active conversation practice activities can create an interactive and fun learning atmosphere, thereby making students comfortable and more motivated to participate more actively. Thus, student enthusiasm through conversation practice can be considered an effective strategy for achieving fluency and fluency in speaking English. Consistent and innovative implementation can create sustainable improvements in students' speaking abilities.

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