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Leveraging Individual Production to Enhance Students’ Speaking Abilities: An Exploration of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) Activity

Nilai Susanti, Nanik Mariyati dan Yusrilaili Ningsih
Politeknik Negeri Jember, Indonesia

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Abstract

Speaking is an essential skill in language learning, but many students have difficulty developing this aspect due to limited practice and lack of confidence. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of individual production in self-directed learning (SDL) to improve students' speaking skills. Using a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, this study involved 85 Computer Engineering students who took the Intermediate English course. Data is collected through observation, interviews, and analysis of audio and video recordings from various individual production activities, such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, and sing a song. The results of the study show that individual production in SDL contributes significantly to the improvement of students' speaking skills. A total of 72% of students who were active in individual production experienced an increase in speaking fluency, with fewer pauses and a reduction in the use of filler words. In addition, 65% of students admitted that reflecting on their recordings helped correct grammatical errors and enrich the vocabulary used. From the psychological aspect, 80% of college students reported an increase in confidence in public speaking after undergoing individual production exercises consistently. Individual production in SDL can be an effective strategy in improving students' speaking skills. This method not only improves the technical aspects of speaking, but also helps students in building confidence and overcoming speaking anxiety. Therefore, the application of SDL based on individual production can be used as a broader approach in language learning, especially for students who need independent speaking practice.

Keywords: Individual Production, Independent Learning, Speaking Ability, SDL.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is one of the essential skills in language learning that is often a challenge for students, especially for those who do not have a supportive environment to practice. According to Fauzan, et al (2024), language is the main communication tool that allows humans to understand each other in social and cultural contexts. However, in the academic environment, students often experience obstacles such as lack of confidence, lack of interaction in the target language, and limited time in formal class sessions.

Factors that affect students' speaking ability can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, confidence, and attitude towards the target language. Meanwhile, external factors include the learning environment, family support, and opportunities to interact in the target language. Research by Kuntarto, et al (2023) shows that internal factors such as shyness and lack of confidence, as well as external factors such as lack of environmental support, can hinder students' speaking skills.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) offers an approach that allows students to take initiative in improving their speaking skills. Students who implement independent learning tend to be more proactive in seeking information, developing understanding, and overcoming academic difficulties without always having to rely on lecturers. Independent learning can increase students' motivation to learn, problem-solving skills, and communication skills (Setyawaty, et al., 2023).

In the context of higher education, the self-directed learning (SDL) approach is one of the strategies that is increasingly used to improve student competence in various fields, including speaking skills. SDL allows students to take control of their own learning by choosing methods and strategies that suit their needs. Research by Mukarom (2024) emphasizes the importance of understanding individual factors in second language learning to design effective teaching. In this case, individual productions such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, and sing a song can be effective media to improve students' speaking skills. The use of video recordings as a learning aid has shown the potential to improve students' communication skills (Maulana, et al., 2024). In addition, the discussion method can also be an effective means of improving students' speaking skills (Dzaky, et al., 2024).

Research by Fauzi, et al (2021) shows that the use of English vlogs significantly improves students' speaking skills. In addition, research by Rahmawati (2022) found that students' confidence in learning speaking skills in the classroom increased after implementing the right learning strategies. Independent learning can increase students' learning motivation and communication skills (Setyawaty, et al., 2023).

Based on this background, this study aims to explore how individual production in the context of SDL can help improve the speaking skills of Computer Engineering students in Intermediate English courses. By involving 85 students as research subjects, this study will examine the effectiveness of different types of

individual productions, such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, and sing a songs, in improving students' speaking skills.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method. Qualitative research is a research method used to research on natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Fiantika, et al., 2022).

In this study, a qualitative method with a descriptive approach is used to explore how individual production in the context of independent learning can improve the speaking ability of Computer Engineering students who take Intermediate English courses. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and analysis of audio and video recordings produced by students in various forms of individual production such as broadcaster, anchor, storytelling, and singing. The research subjects consisted of 85 students, and the research instruments included observation sheets, interview guidelines, and tools for recording analysis.

This approach allows researchers to deeply understand students' experiences and perceptions related to individual production activities in independent learning, as well as how these activities contribute to the improvement of their speaking skills. Thus, this research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of these learning methods in the context of higher education.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the individual production approach in Self-Directed Learning (SDL) has a significant positive impact on the speaking ability of Computer Engineering students in the Intermediate English course. Based on data obtained from observations, interviews, and analysis of student recordings, it was found that individual productions, such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, and sing a song, contributed to improving student fluency, language structure, and confidence.

1. Speaking Fluency

Students who routinely carry out individual production activities show a significant improvement in speaking fluency. Indicators of this improvement include longer speaking duration, reduced pauses, and reduced use of filler words such as "uh" or "hmm". In the interview, the majority of students stated that they felt more comfortable speaking in English after practicing independently. Observation data revealed that 72% of students who were active in SDL were able to speak more fluently compared to students who rarely did individual production exercises.

This increase in speaking fluency can be explained through the concept of repetition and habituation in language learning. According to Nation (2020), independent repetition through individual speaking activities allows students to strengthen the connection between language concepts and oral production. By constantly practicing speaking in more relaxed and non-stressful situations, students can develop spontaneity skills in speaking. In addition, research by Teng (2021) shows that individual task-based production strategies can improve speaking fluency by reducing the cognitive load that usually arises when speaking in formal situations. In this case, students who are involved in SDL have more opportunities to develop natural rhythms and speech patterns.

In addition, college students who often record themselves while speaking have the opportunity to evaluate their weaknesses and correct them independently. A study by Luoma (2020) revealed that students who relisten to their recordings can more easily recognize patterns of errors in grammar, pronunciation, and intonation. For example, some students report that they often overuse filler words or have difficulty articulating certain words. By being aware of these mistakes, they can gradually improve the clarity and precision of speaking. This was also reinforced by the interview data, where 68% of students stated that they felt more confident speaking up after correcting their mistakes through personal recordings.

These findings are in line with the research of Syafiq, et al (2023), which stated that the use of vlogs as a learning medium can increase students' speaking time, help them reduce shyness, increase confidence, and develop fluency. In addition, research conducted by Haryadi (2020) shows that reading habits have a positive influence on English speaking ability, where there is a significant correlation between reading habits and students' speaking ability. Thus, self-practice through individual productions, such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, sing a song or similar activities, can improve students' speaking fluency. Repetition and self-paced practice allow students to increase language processing speed and reduce speech barriers, ultimately contributing to improved fluency in their speech.

2. Structure and Vocabulary

Analysis of the recordings showed that students who listened back to their recordings were more aware of grammatical errors and vocabulary used. As many as 65% of students stated that they were able to identify errors such as the use of the wrong tense or the mismatch between the subject and the predicate after reflecting on their recordings. In addition, students who often do storytelling tend to use richer and varied vocabulary compared to students who only do text-based exercises. Isnaini (2022) emphasized that vocabulary mastery has a significant influence on foreign language speaking skills, where a deeper understanding of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability allows concrete steps to enrich students' learning experiences.

Awareness of better language structure also has an impact on improving students' syntactic skills. A deeper understanding of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and the ability to speak a foreign language allows for concrete steps to enrich students' learning experiences (Isnaini, 2022). This shows that SDL-based individual production not only improves speaking fluency but also strengthens practical grammar understanding.

In addition to the structural aspect, vocabulary enrichment is also a positive impact of individual production activities. Students who chose assignments such as storytelling, broadcasting, or acting out dialogue showed a significant increase in the number and variety of vocabulary they used. A deeper understanding of the relationship between vocabulary mastery and the ability to speak a foreign language allows for concrete steps to enrich students' learning experiences (Isnaini, 2022). In interviews, some college students revealed that they began to use more complex synonyms or phrases to avoid repeating simple words. Observation data shows that 67% of students who do individual production routinely are able to use a more diverse vocabulary than students who only rely on reading materials.

From the perspective of language learning, this increased awareness of structure and vocabulary is in line with the input and output theory put forward by Swain, which states that language processing becomes more effective when individuals not only receive language input but also actively produce outputs that can be evaluated on their own. In the context of this study, students who reflect on their own recordings can act as evaluators of their mistakes and developments. That way, the language learning process becomes more holistic, where students not only understand the rules of language theoretically but also apply them in real life in daily communication.

3. Confidence

Confidence is an important factor in mastering speaking skills. The results of interviews with students revealed that they felt more confident speaking in front of the class after getting used to doing independent exercises. As many as 80% of students who are active in individual production stated that they no longer feel awkward or afraid when they have to speak in front of others. This is also seen in classroom observations, where students who have experience in individual production are more daring to speak up in discussion and presentation sessions. This is in line with research by Yahrif, et al (2022) which shows that activities such as English Camp can increase students' motivation and confidence in communicating using English.

In addition, psycholinguistic factors also play a role in increasing self-confidence. Research by Anggraini, et al (2025) identified that speech disorders in students during teaching practice can be caused by psycholinguistic factors. By understanding and addressing these factors through self-practice and reflection on individual production, students can increase their confidence in speaking. Research by Putri, et al (2023) also emphasizes

the importance of practicing speaking English regularly to increase confidence. They found that the "Daily English Speaking" program can help individuals communicate more confidently using English. This is in line with the finding that consistent self-practice can reduce speaking anxiety and increase confidence in the use of foreign languages.

Thus, this study shows that the application of Self-Directed Learning through individual production can be an effective strategy in improving students' speaking skills. These findings underscore the importance of providing opportunities for students to practice independently by utilizing technologies such as audio and video recording. Thus, educational institutions can consider integrating this method into the curriculum to support the development of students' speaking skills more optimally.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of individual production in self-directed learning (SDL) plays a significant role in improving the speaking ability of Computer Engineering students in the Intermediate English course. Individual production activities, such as broadcasters, anchors, storytelling, sing a song or similar activities have proven to be effective in improving students' fluency, language structure, vocabulary, and confidence. Research data shows that 72% of students who are active in SDL experience an improvement in speaking fluency, while 65% become more aware of their grammatical and vocabulary mistakes.

In addition to the technical aspects of speaking, the study also revealed that individual production helps students overcome fear and anxiety in public speaking. As many as 80% of students who actively do independent training report an increase in confidence in formal and academic situations. As such, individual production in the SDL can be a recommended strategy in language learning, especially for students who need more opportunities to practice speaking outside of a formal classroom setting.

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