

Students' Perceptions of Using Ted Talks as a Media to Improving Speaking Skill

Syafrizal

Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Indonesia
syafrizal@untirta.ac.id

Tosi Rut Syamsun

Special Need School, Serang City, Banten, Indonesia
tosi441@guru.slb.belajar.id

Article History

Received: 12 July 2022

Reviewed: 13 July 2022

Accepted: 30 March 2023

Published: 30 April 2023

Highlights

TED Talks give impactful and meaningful messages to enhance self-esteem and deal with anxiety when performing in front of audiences.

ABSTRACT: This research aimed to describe the students' perceptions of improving speaking skills using TED Talks as a learning media. Qualitative research is implicated in this study with a descriptive approach. The questionnaire was used as the instrument, and ten open-ended questions were allocated to the participants. The participants were English Department students in the sixth semester in precise. Nineteen students filled out the questionnaire. The data were analyzed in descriptive form. The result from the participants through the questionnaire reveals that the participants respond positively to the utilization of TED Talks in improving speaking skills. TED Talks assist students in mastering linguistic competencies. Furthermore, TED Talks help them give impactful and meaningful messages to enhance self-esteem and deal with anxiety when performing in front of audiences.

Keywords: TED Talks, Speaking Skills, Language Learning, Improving.

Introduction

In language learning, speaking is believed to be one of the most vital skills in understanding the second or foreign language besides the native language. As Ur (1996) mentioned, speaking is needed since it is a medium to understand language usage, such as the native speaker, and comprehend the purposes through speaking. According to Brown (1994, cited in Burns and Joyce, 1997), speaking is an associated process where forming purpose implicates creating, obtaining, and processing information simultaneously. In communicating, Burns and Joyce (1997) mentioned that the function of language or practices appears in particular speech situations. Speaking in its application requires the students to learn the sociolinguistics form, not only mastery at grammar structural, pronunciation, vocabulary (linguistics).

Speaking skills from people's perspectives may seem easy because they consider it simply to talk about a related topic to the interlocutors. However, speaking requires skills that assist in delivering information through the interlocutors or listeners. Van Duzer (1997) states that speaking skills and speech production have influenced the interaction to succeed. The speakers needed to predict and construct speech structure according to the situations. Burns and Joyce (1997) also state that the speakers should handle the problems and mastery at paraphrasing, delivering feedback, etc. It requires the students to learn about speaking skills. Thornbury

(2005, cited in Qomar. A, 2020) said that the production of speech becomes an element in daily life. It evolves being the skills that students must learn in the university grade. Murcia also indicates that the management of English's stress structure, rhythm form, and intonation should become students' concern to maintain relations with their speakers. (Anggraeni & Wulanjani, 2017).

In developing speaking skills, various factors affect students in the implementation. The primary factors are related to linguistics competence, such as vocabulary, collocations, and pronunciation, in developing students' fluency as foreign language speakers. Self-confidence and competence led the students to self-derivation because they were afraid to cause errors, and teachers were in charge of creating a safe place to feel pleased (Patil, 2008). Some elements should be involved to enhance the usefulness of speaking, as Shumin (1997) proposed, including social-cultural factors, affective factors, and linguistic competence as follows discourse, grammar structure, etc.

Nowadays, technology takes part as a critical role in language learning. Language learning is being assisted by technology to improve the quality of learning. Technology presents the students with various materials for learning, such as websites and online platforms, followed by the limitless database and source of information. Technology enhances the learning process because it is capable of creating the content and visual appearance more interactive (Pennington, 2010). These days, audio-visual is developing to the interactive video, replacing printed-materials since audio-visual is more attractive in its form. Sherman (2003) said that different senses are involved when people watch the video simultaneously. They are seeing and hearing sensory, which encourages attractiveness in the purpose of the words. Original materials led to comprehend natural circumstances. Through technology, students can widen their perspective and knowledge and adapt themselves to actual conditions. As Ellis (1986) stated in (Syafrizal, 2017) there are two types of language learning, naturalistic and formal situation. In naturalistic, language can be learned in anywhere, anytime and with everyone in their environment without teacher involvement. Hence, audio-visual let the students learn deprived of limited of time and places

One of the most known techniques and mostly used by people in speaking activities is storytelling. Storytelling has become an essential part of human communication as a means of sharing knowledge, experience, and thoughts (Rychkova, 2020). Among the platform that provides media for learning, TED Talks has become one of the media that provides both storytelling and technology involvement. TED Talks are increasingly popular and concerned on social media these days. TED Talks is a digital media platform that provides free and open access to video learning. (Kusumastuty, et al., 2019). TED Talks are a type of multimedia presentation delivered by professionals and people with ideas. One video-based kind of technology has the potential to change how people learn in public. Active media learning has been proven in the TED Talks study. TED Talks are multimedia presentations given by people who aren't professional speakers or, as they're more commonly known, open presentations.

TED Talks utilized as a showcase for speakers delivering well-formed thoughts in under 18 minutes. However, to cover any topic to become public interest, it enlarged since the latest years (Izzah, et al., 2020). The TED Talk program is set up as a public speaking system in

which anyone can freely observe the speakers as they deliver their speeches. It is a series of fascinating talks given by expert speakers to audiences on various topics. Because the audience's attention only requires a short time, this short talk model works well. Speakers from all over the world give speeches on various topics, including technology, the arts, entertainment, politics, and social issues. A free transcript is also available for each show, which can be downloaded to be used as a reference while listening to the lecture.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher intended to explore and analyze students' perceptions about Ted Talks as a media of learning in current times. The researcher also intended to know what causes the students have difficulties in enhancing speaking skills so that suitable and sufficient actions can be embraced.

Method

The study involved qualitative research with a descriptive approach. There is only one research question of this study: "How students' opinion and thoughts regarding using TED Talks in acquiring speaking skills?" The researcher employed a qualitative analysis study to answer the research question since the analysis concentrated on the depth investigation rather than the quantity of the data. Qualitative research aims to create a detailed description of the phenomenon of interest (Vishnevsky & Beandlands, 2004). This method involved qualitative research since EFL students are familiar with TED Talks which contain detailed experiences in the concerned phenomenon, as (Vishnevsky & Beandlands, 2004) claimed.

The data was taken from English Department students in the sixth semester. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument and data collecting technique. In the questionnaire, there are several open-ended questions with one-on-one interviews adaption which written in (Luxembourg, 2017) to discover students' view about utilization of TED Talks in improving speaking skills.

After accumulating the data, the researcher continued to analyze the data that have been collected in questionnaire. The researcher will classify the responses that fits the research objective. Then the data will be analyzed to identify crucial parts. Last, the data will be showed and the conclusion will be drawn based on data analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The results of this study are presented based on the participants' responses. five participants responded to the questionnaire, consisting of two males and three females. The participants are from the English Department 2019. So, this finding section contains their experience and opinions regarding TED Talks as a media of learning in improving speaking skills. The researcher provides several questions with open-ended type and the data will be shown in description form and some of the responses from participants will be included.

Table 1
Students' Thoughts in Utilizing TED Talks as a Learning Media

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|--|
| NF | <i>With short talk and interesting topics, it is effortless for the audience to capture the speakers' information. It is also possible to improve the audience's speaking and listening skills.</i> |
| LP | <i>In my opinion, using TED Talks is it useful to learn pronunciation accent in many countries and we found something new to learn from many interesting topics.</i> |
| FO | <i>I think this is a really nice to use it as a learning media because it gives us benefit to know everything about something that we want to know especially for increasing our speaking skill towards our improvements in speaking</i> |
| AD | <i>I think it's quite good but there are several concerns if you want to use it as media of learning such as: the grade, I think for elementary students don't fit in if you want to use this media.</i> |
| MM | <i>This media is very useful for us. Because it is can increasing our speaking skill and make English learning not boring.</i> |

Based on the responses, the participants agreed that TED Talks is a helpful, accessible platform and can be utilized as a media for learning and improving speaking skills because they claimed that TED Talks not only offer exciting topics to enhance viewers' knowledge. On the other hand, TED Talks also assist them in improving speaking skills by presenting different accents of the speakers. The participants believe TED Talks introduces them to a new style of English, such as various vocabularies and pronunciations.

Table 1
Students' View on How Interesting TED Talks is and The Reason Why TED Talks is Interesting

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|--|
| NF | <i>I think TED Talks is an interesting media to learn speaking because there are many speakers from many ages inside it and it can motivate us to do the big challenge, speak and watched by many people.</i> |
| FO | <i>I think it might be interesting if we learn our speaking skills using TED talks by observing the speakers' speaking skills on the stage, like we look the way he speaks in front of lots of people, how they are speaking in different accent, etc.</i> |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AD | <i>Yes of course, seeing other people doing speech we also learn how to do that. start from gesture, tones, matter, etc.</i> |
| LP | <i>Yes, it is. because the speaker has a good pronunciation, talks about interesting topics and they are good public speaker that we can learn by themselves.</i> |
| MM | <i>Yes, this is very interesting media. In English learning we need new innovation for making class is more active and fun.</i> |

Most participants agreed that TED Talks is an exciting platform to learn speaking. They provide several reasons why TED Talks is engaging, such as the video offered by TED Talks can be chosen by the viewers according to their needs and interest. Furthermore, the participants also state that the speakers from TED Talks provide good pronunciation, gestures, tones. One of participants give a suggestion that learning to speak in TED Talks is might be interesting if the viewers not only absorb the linguistic competence, but also observe how to treat the audience, speak in front of people, handle nervousness, etc.

Table 3
The Consideration of Choosing TED Talks For Improving Speaking Skills

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|---|
| RF | <i>Because I am interested in watching the speakers in these TED Talks videos, such as how they talk like intonations, gestures, fluency. From there, I feel inspired and able to learn from the speakers.</i> |
| AD | <i>Because from ted talks, I can find out the speakers' accents of ted talks and keep me motivated.</i> |
| MM | <i>Because there are many best speakers or experts who trigger us to speak like them and about issues that they arise are good for us. Also most of speakers are native speakers which make us to learn about micro skill in speaking such as grammar and pronunciation correctly that encourage us to do the same way like them in improving speaking skill.</i> |
| FO | <i>Because in the TED Talks, we can see many speakers in the world and make us motivated in English learning.</i> |
| LP | <i>Because in this media, we can find many speakers and topic that give us new information. Therefore, this media is very informative in English learning.</i> |

This question intended to understand why the participants chose TED Talks as a learning media. The result shows that the participants chose TED Talks is because TED Talks are easy to use, accessible, various videos are provided on TED Talks. Furthermore, the quality of the TED Talks speaker become their consideration. Also, the participant mentioned that what made him choose TED Talks is that the speakers are native speakers, so he can learn about micro-skills in speaking, such as grammar and pronunciation, correctly.

Table 4

Students' Opinion Toward The TED Talks' Speakers and The Benefits They Get From Them (E.g Pronunciation, Grammar, Fluency, etc)

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|---|
| LP | <i>In my opinion, I get to learn pronunciations, fluency, grammar and confident to speak in public</i> |
| FO | <i>I'm more into on their accent and fluency, I like to listen on the speaker when they have a very bold and strong accent, it's interesting to see a lot of different way on conveying English language.</i> |
| RF | <i>In my opinion, the speaking skill of TED Talks' speakers was great. I can get new knowledge about their pronunciation (accents), vocabulary, grammar.</i> |
| AD | <i>Of course they're fluent, they have a good pronunciation, and I love when they're giving us motivation. Vocabularies and grammar are also well spoken.</i> |
| MM | <i>For me, in Ted Talks there are many benefits that we can get, the benefits are our vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation will improve.</i> |

According to the responses, the participants mentioned that the speakers' ability in speaking English is perfect and well-delivered. The participants were interested in how the speakers have a very bold and powerful accent which influenced them to convey English differently. Furthermore, the participants absorb many things from the speakers, such as fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and accents. Likewise, they said that the speakers' abilities variously assist them to improve their speaking skills.

Table 5

The Obstacles Faced by Students in Acquiring Speaking Skills and How to Unravel The Problems.

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|--|
| RF | <i>Several obstacles in learning speaking is about limited of vocabulary understanding but the way to solve this problem is memorizing and always to</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | <i>watch an English or listening music so that we can have the improvement of our pronunciation.</i> |
| FO | <i>Yes, anxiety. but things that help me is I only focus to myself and ignore the audience.</i> |
| AD | <i>I think I still less confident to speak in front of many people and still lack in vocabularies. To overcome the obstacle, I should practice hardly and learn many new things again.</i> |
| LP | <i>The feeling of anxiety when it goes wrong. I overcome it with more trying.</i> |
| MM | <i>I feel afraid when I speak in English language, but it will get better if we always try and never surrender.</i> |

Based on the responses from the participants, the researcher can unravel them one by one. There are four main obstacles that the participants faced. First is limited vocabulary, second is anxiety, third is less confidence, and last is laziness. However, the participants are still trying to overcome these problems. They have their way of solving the difficulties to achieve their goals.

Table 6
The Effort from Students to Maximize The Result of Learning Speaking

| Participants | Responses |
|---------------------|---|
| FO | <i>Imitate how the speaker talk.</i> |
| RF | <i>Watching the video regularly and noted every single word that I haven't known before it will increase my ability in English.</i> |
| AD | <i>Watching the video and enabling English subtitles to find out how to pronounce a word.</i> |
| LP | <i>Re-train the word heard from the take notes of the video already watched.</i> |
| MM | <i>attention to the speakers in the video and try to speak like the speakers.</i> |

The participants not only watch the video but also take several actions to achieve the maximum result in speaking skills by using TED Talks. For example, using subtitles while watching the video to learn how to pronounce a word, taking notes on every word never heard previously, then trying to practice the pronunciation, imitating the speaker, etc.

Discussion

The researcher found obstacles that the participants faced when improving their speaking skills. The obstacles are lack of vocabulary, anxiety, less confidence, and laziness. These factors can affect how successful students can practice their speaking skills. Most of them are judged when learning a language, especially their performance in speaking skills. This occasion happens in a private or public place (Gistituati, et al., 2019) The first factor is vocabulary mastery. Due to

a lack of vocabulary as well as an inability to pick up on tone and intonation, the non-native speaker faces major difficulties (Hamad et al., 2019). Some students who live in countries where English is not their first language do not have access to native speakers who can help them learn new vocabulary or learn in learning centers or schools.

Derin & Hamuddin (2019) claimed that anxiety is the second factor when students in progress to acquire speaking skills. Al-Sobhi & Preece (2018) mentioned, anxiety and fear involve in learning speaking effectively. The students experience it hard to maintain control when dealing with speaking and audience. Anandari (2015) said that the main reason why the students experience anxiety is because anxiety is a complex substance which elaborate the students' psychological conditions. This causes why speaking skills is fearful for many students, especially whose lack of self-esteem influence the ability to speak English.

Based on what the researcher found, it can be concluded that the participants have positive perceptions of TED Talks. The participants said, TED Talks is an accessible platform where the viewer can watch it everywhere; since TED Talks is part of technology, there are no limitations on accessing it. Based on the participants, the lecturer often used TED Talks as a reference in the classroom, so the role of the lecturer here is important because they introduce it to the students. The participants agreed that TED Talks is a helpful and exciting learning media that can assist students with various topics. Furthermore, they claimed that, besides offering exciting topics, TED Talks also present different accents of the speakers, introducing them to a new style of English.

In linguistic competence, the researcher found that the participants acquired new vocabulary, fluency, intonation, tone of voice and presented to different accents. On the other hand, they also learn about public speaking, such as gestures, facial expressions, speaking in front of the audience, and interacting with the audience. Although the participants faced some obstacle in learning speaking, they still can overcome it with practicing and well preparation.

Conclusion

Following the discussion above, the researcher can conclude that TED Talks can be an appropriate tool for EFL students to enhance their speaking skills. Although TED Talks as a form of video-based learning appeared recently, EFL students have responded positively. TED Talks are exciting since they present a consistent show that delivers a meaningful message to students who learn English as a foreign language. The speakers of TED Talks come from any background. The speakers on stage come from any country and nationality, and they can communicate fluently in a language that is not their native language. Using TED Talks in the classroom might improve students' attitudes and increase their self-esteem as aspiring EFL speakers. If teachers plan to employ TED Talks sessions by speakers from the same nation or ethnicity as the pupils, this effect may be amplified. Students may be more inspired to speak in a show of the class and soon in public, with impressive evidence of how far they may travel.

References

- Al-Sobhi & Preece. (2018). Teaching English Speaking Skills To The Arab Students In The Saudi School In Kuala Lumpur: Problems And Solutions. *International Journal Of Education & Literacy Studies*, 3.

- Anandari, C. L. (2015). Indonesian Efl Students' Anxiety In Speech Production: Possible Causes And Remedy. *Teflin Journal*.
- Anggraeni & Wulanjani. (2017). The Roles Of Ted Talks And Vlog In Enhancing Students' Activeness In Speaking Class.
- Choirunniza, O. D. (2017). The Difficulties Faced By The Teachers In Managing Class Of Eyl Students At Eyl Program Conducted By English Department In University Of Muhammadiyah Malang. Malang.
- Derin & Hamuddin. (2019). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, And Enjoyment During Study Abroad: A Review Of Selected Paper.
- Gistituati, Et Al. (2019). Using Visual Aids To Develop Students' Speaking Skill. *Advances In Social Science, Education And Humanities Research*.
- Hamad, Et Al. (2019). The Impact Of Using Youtubes And Audio Tracks Imitation Yati On Improving Speaking Skills Of Efl Learners. *English Language Teaching*.
- Izzah, Et Al. (2020). Student's Perception Of Ted Talk Video To Improve Listening Skill. *Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran*, 1-2.
- Kusumastuty, Et Al. (2019). Student's Perceptions Of Using Ted Talks To Improve Efl Speaking Skill. *Uhamka International Conference On Elt And Call (Uicell)*, (Pp. 1-2).
- Luxembourg. (2017). *Qualitative Methodologies For Questionnaire Assessment*. European Commission Eurostat.
- Pramerta, I. G. (2019). Interactive Video As English Teaching Materials For Speaking. *Journal Of English Language Education*.
- Qomar, A. H. (2020). Using Ted Talks For Efl Learners To Boost Their Speaking Skill. 1-2.
- Rychkova. (2020). *Storytelling In Ted Talks*. Mississippi: Proquest Llc.
- Sargeant, J. (2012). *Qualitative Research Part Ii: Participants, Analysis, And Quality Assurance*.
- Sherman. (2003). *Using Authentic Video In The Language Classroom*.
- Syafrizal. (2017). *Teaching English As A Foreign Language*. Serang: Untirta Press.
- Vishnevsky & Beandlands. (2004). Interpreting Research In Nephrology Nursing: Qualitative Research. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*.
- Wigmore, I. (2014, May). Retrieved From Definition Ted Talk: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/Definition/Ted-Talk>

