

The Use of Digital Multimodal Approach in Teaching English Speaking Skill

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Abstract

This study investigates the development of students' English-speaking skills and self-confidence by implementing a digital multimodal presentation project in an English-speaking class. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected from 31 students and one English teacher through classroom observations, reflective journals, interviews, and document reviews. The findings indicate that the multimodal approach helped students improve their speaking proficiency by integrating various digital tools, fostering creativity, and reducing anxiety. However, some students faced challenges in terms of technical difficulties and limited English vocabulary. Despite these obstacles, the digital multimodal project significantly contributed to building students' self-confidence in speaking English. This method is recommended for further use to enhance students' engagement and communication skills in the language-learning process.

Keywords: Self-Confidence; Speaking Skills; Multimodal Presentation

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the importance of students' self-confidence in teaching speaking skills has gained substantial recognition (Arianto et al., 2023; Listyani & Kristie, 2018; Rosmayanti et al., 2023). This heightened awareness has inspired extensive research efforts to understand the intricate relationship between self-confidence and language acquisition. Brown (2019) underscores that self-confidence is pivotal in language learning, particularly in fostering students' ability to speak confidently. The research highlights how self-confidence significantly influences learners' capacity to communicate effectively in a second language.

In Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN) Kota Pasuruan, the integration of specialized classes, such as the Excellent Class, Information Technology (IT) Class, Tahfiz Class, and Regular Class, provides a diverse learning environment. However, a lack of motivation to speak English persists among students. Factors contributing to this challenge include limited exposure to spoken English daily, fear of making mistakes, and a predominant focus on grammar and writing over speaking and listening skills. Additionally, the absence of interactive classroom activities that encourage the use of English actively exacerbates this issue. Consequently, students experience low confidence in initiating conversations, sharing ideas, and expressing their thoughts in English.

Self-confidence is known to enhance students' linguistic and communicative competence. Johnson (2018) found that higher-confident learners exhibit greater fluency and accuracy in speaking tasks. Moreover, Garcia et al. (2016) revealed that self-confident learners develop broader vocabulary and improved grammatical accuracy, underscoring self-confidence's critical role in language proficiency. Beyond language mechanics, self-confidence fosters pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills, enabling students to sustain conversations, negotiate meaning, and express ideas coherently. It also shapes intrinsic motivation, driving students to seek language learning opportunities and improve their speaking skills actively.

While previous studies emphasize the significance of self-confidence in language acquisition and motivation, limited attention has been paid to the use of digital-based instructional media as a tool to foster self-confidence in speaking. Multimodal digital approaches, integrating text, audio, video, and images, aim to address diverse learning styles and promote language acquisition. The Multimodal Presentation Project (MPP) is a practical method that empowers students to create and deliver digital media presentations. This approach enriches language elements and builds speaking confidence through engaging, technology-supported activities (Wisudawaty et al., 2015).

Several studies have highlighted the potential of multimodal approaches in language learning. For instance, Siahaan (2020) demonstrated that digital multimodal public speaking media fosters learning motivation and language skills development. Nurviyani et al. (2022) revealed that tools like virtual reality and YouTube enable interactive and engaging English teaching processes, while Wang et al. (2023) emphasized the role of mentor-student collaboration in improving language proficiency through multimodal learning. Furthermore, Yuniarti et al. (2022) showed that digital storytelling enhances speaking skills, particularly when multimodal elements align with learners' cultural contexts. Research by Pham and Lim (2022) in Vietnam highlighted that tools like Visme enhance creativity and collaboration. Kim et al. (2021) found that short video projects help articulate emotions and develop students' identities.

Despite its potential, studies on self-confidence in teaching speaking at the Islamic secondary school level, mainly through multimodal digital approaches, remain scarce. Observations at MTsN Kota Pasuruan indicate the need for innovative methods to enhance students' confidence and speaking abilities. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of a digital multimodal presentation project in fostering students' self-confidence and improving their English-speaking skills. This research contributes to the field by addressing a critical gap and exploring technology integration to enhance speaking confidence in the classroom. By examining students' development, the challenges they face, and the extent of their progress, the study offers valuable insights for educators aiming to innovate teaching methods and foster active participation in English language learning.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design described by Creswell and Guetterman (2019) to provide an in-depth understanding of students' experiences in improving their English-speaking skills through a digital multimodal presentation project. It explores how students enhance their speaking skills through the project, identifies challenges faced during its implementation, and assesses the extent to which students' confidence in speaking English develops. This qualitative study focuses on understanding the processes and obstacles encountered by students. Also, it examines the extent to which students' self-confidence in speaking English is enhanced through the project, as observed in their classroom participation, reflective journals, and final presentations.

Participants

The research was conducted at MTsN Pasuruan, located at Jln. Ir. H. Juanda No. 85, Bugul Kidul, Pasuruan, East Java, was selected due to its status as the only state-run MTs in the area and its adequate facilities supporting digital multimodal teaching methods. The participants included an experienced English teacher with nearly 10 years of teaching, recognized for her expertise in teaching speaking skills in achievement classes, and 31 students from class VIII-B, chosen based on the teacher's recommendation due to their more significant challenges in speaking English compared to other classes.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used for data collection included classroom observations, reflective journals, document reviews, and teacher interviews. Non-participant classroom observations focused on students' speaking confidence, such as eye contact, body posture, and voice volume, with data documented through field notes, photos, and videos. Reflective journals, adapted from Barkhuizen (2018) and Farrell (2013), captured students' reflections at various stages: before-action (initial perceptions of speaking English), in-action (experiences during the multimodal project), on-action (challenges encountered), and for-action (plans for future improvement). Document reviews involved analyzing student multimodal projects, photos, and speaking scores, which were assessed using O'Malley and Pierce's (1990) rubrics to triangulate data. Lastly, semi-structured interviews with the teacher provided insights into students' progress, challenges, and strategies to build their confidence during the project.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Implementation of the Digital Multimodal Presentation Project in the English-Speaking Class

The digital multimodal presentation project was implemented over five sessions, introducing descriptive texts and culminating in students creating and sharing their presentations on Instagram. This structured approach aimed to enhance students' speaking skills and build their confidence in English communication.

In the first session, the teacher introduced descriptive texts using PowerPoint, covering their purpose, structure, and language features. Students actively participated, learning how to describe people using adjectives and present tense, which laid a strong foundation for subsequent activities.

The second session focused on reading and analyzing descriptive texts. To deepen their understanding, students answered comprehension questions and identified key text elements, such as identification and description. Worksheets helped reinforce these concepts, preparing students for writing their descriptive texts.

In the third session, students wrote about their idols using digital dictionaries to expand their vocabulary. This activity allowed them to draft structured and detailed descriptions, fostering writing and speaking skills.

The fourth session introduced the use of Canva to create multimodal presentations based on their descriptive texts. Students explored design options to align visuals with content, enhancing their technical and creative skills. The teacher provided support while encouraging independent expression.

The final sessions involved recording and uploading their presentations to Instagram. Students refined their recordings and shared their work online, receiving feedback from the teacher and peers. This collaborative process improved their confidence and communication abilities, integrating speaking practice with digital literacy.

Obstacles Faced by Students in Implementing the Digital Multimodal Presentation Project

The implementation of the digital multimodal presentation project revealed several challenges faced by students, which were documented through reflective journals.

One significant obstacle was difficulty with English pronunciation, as many students felt nervous about making mistakes. This fear disrupted their confidence when speaking. For example, students reported struggling with difficult words or insufficient practice, which hindered their fluency.

Another common issue was a lack of confidence and shyness when speaking in front of others. Students admitted to feeling anxious about public speaking, with many worrying about making errors or being judged, which further affected their communication ability.

Additionally, limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge posed a barrier to self-expression. Students struggled to find appropriate words or understand grammatical structures, making it harder to convey their ideas accurately.

The Extent of Students' Self-Confidence in Speaking English Built After Learning Through the Digital Multimodal Presentation Project

The analysis of student confidence in speaking English was based on three stages of assessments: *Telling Holiday Experience*, *Describing My Idol* (using the multimodal presentation project), and *Independence Day Experience*. Data from 31 students in class VIII-B at MTsN Pasuruan revealed several key findings.

Score Improvement and Increased Confidence

Most students showed improved scores across the assessments, reflecting increased confidence. For instance, students who initially scored 62.5 often scored 81.25 or higher in subsequent assessments. This improvement demonstrates the positive impact of the multimodal presentation project on their speaking abilities. The table below shows the increased score.

Name	First Score (Telling Holiday Experience)	Last Score (Independence Day Experience)	Improvement
A. K	62.5	81.25	+18.75
A. M. A.	75	87.5	+12.5
A. R. Z	75	87.5	+12.5
A. F. S	62.5	81.25	+18.75
E. N. A. U	62.5	81.25	+18.75
F. Z. F. A	62.5	81.25	+18.75
I. I. N	62.5	93.75	+31.25
M. K	62.5	87.5	+25.0

Consistency and Stability in Confidence

Some students consistently maintained high scores (above 81.25), indicating stable confidence throughout the assessments. These students demonstrated comfort and readiness in speaking English, suggesting they adapted well to the teaching methods. The table below shows us the stability level of confidence.

No	Assessment Stage	Average Score	Confidence Level
1	Telling Holiday Experience	70.97	Initial confidence, varied
2	Describing My Idol (Multimodal)	84.68	Significant improvement
3	Independence Day Experience	85.32	Stable high confidence overall

Impact of Multimodal Learning

The multimodal approach, incorporating digital tools and visual aids, significantly built students' confidence. By preparing and delivering presentations with multimedia elements, students felt more equipped to express themselves and communicate effectively in front of an audience.

Teacher and Document Observations

The English teacher noted noticeable changes in student behavior during the project. Initially, students hesitated to speak English and avoided practicing in front of the class. By the end of the project, many students actively engaged in discussions interacted confidently with their peers and demonstrated enthusiasm for learning English.

Visual Evidence of Confidence Growth

Photos and videos captured the progression of students' presentations. Early in the project, students avoided eye contact and appeared nervous. Over time, they began to use gestures and show open body language, indicating improved confidence and comfort in public speaking.

Discussion

This section addresses the research questions regarding the development of students' English-speaking skills, the obstacles they faced, and the extent to which implementing the digital multimodal presentation project built their self-confidence in speaking.

The Implementation of the Digital Multimodal Presentation Project in the English-Speaking Class

By integrating technology and collaborative learning, the digital multimodal presentation project played a crucial role in enhancing students' speaking skills and confidence. Classroom observations highlighted several key aspects that contributed to students' English proficiency development, especially in the context of descriptive text.

Foundation in Descriptive Text

Initial sessions focused on teaching descriptive text, a vital skill for effective communication. Using PowerPoint presentations to introduce the elements of descriptive text—definition, purpose, structure, and language features—was effective in helping students grasp these concepts. Research by Hwang et al. (2021) supports the idea that visual aids enhance comprehension and retention, while Dörnyei (2020) notes that relevant learning materials increase student engagement. This approach captured students' interest and equipped them with the tools to articulate their thoughts clearly.

Reading and Analysing Descriptive Texts

By reading and analyzing descriptive texts, students better understood text structure and language use. Worksheets helped students break down key components like identification, description, adjectives, and tense usage, which are essential for writing and speaking. Alharbi (2022) emphasizes that structured reading activities improve analytical and comprehension skills, further preparing students for speaking tasks.

Writing and Creativity in Digital Platforms

The "My Idol" activity encouraged students to research their idols and draft descriptive texts, fostering independent learning and critical thinking. Integrating digital dictionaries supported vocabulary acquisition and more accurate expression (Chen, 2023). Designing multimodal presentations on Canva allowed students to express their creativity, enhancing engagement and ownership of the learning process. This aligns with Liu et al. (2022), who argue that student autonomy boosts learning investment.

Speaking and Peer Interaction

The speaking component, involving recording and sharing presentations on Instagram, provided a platform for students to showcase their work and receive feedback. This promoted digital literacy and encouraged peer interaction, which enhanced communication skills. Wang et al. (2023) found that peer feedback significantly improves speaking abilities and confidence. Additionally, rehearsing presentations at home allowed students to refine their delivery, contributing to greater confidence in their speaking abilities.

The obstacles faced by students in implementing the digital multimodal presentation project

Students encountered several obstacles in implementing the digital multimodal presentation project, as revealed through the reflective journals they filled out. These challenges impacted their speaking abilities and confidence in the project.

Difficulties in English Pronunciation

A recurring challenge among students was English pronunciation, which affected their confidence. Many students expressed nervousness about making pronunciation mistakes, leading to speaking hesitantly. This aligns with previous studies highlighting how pronunciation difficulties can hinder language acquisition and self-confidence in speaking (Baker, 2011; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Research shows that mispronunciation can reduce learners' willingness to speak, discouraging participation in speaking activities (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Lack of Confidence and Shyness

Another significant issue was a lack of confidence and shyness, particularly in public speaking. Many students noted feeling anxious or self-conscious when speaking English in front of others. This supports findings from research on foreign language anxiety, which shows that students with low self-confidence are more likely to experience anxiety and avoidance in speaking situations (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). As Waring and Evans (2018) noted, anxiety and shyness significantly affect students' speaking performance, preventing them from fully engaging in language activities.

Lack of Vocabulary and Grammar Understanding

A further obstacle identified was a limited vocabulary and poor understanding of grammar, which students felt hindered their ability to express themselves fluently. Studies confirm that a limited vocabulary and weak grammar skills can severely restrict language learners' ability to participate in effective communication (Bialystok, 2001). These challenges underline the importance of vocabulary building and grammar instruction in fostering language proficiency (Nation, 2001).

The extent of students' self-confidence in speaking English built after learning through a digital multimodal presentation project

The data from the speaking assessments show significant improvement in students' confidence across the three stages: Telling Holiday Experiences, Describing My Idol using the multimodal presentation, and describing Independence Day Experiences. This demonstrates the extent to which the digital multimodal presentation project built students' self-confidence in speaking English.

Score Improvement and Confidence Growth

The data reveals a noticeable improvement in students' scores from the first assessment (Telling Holiday Experience) to the second and third assessments (Describing My Idol and Independence Day Experience). For instance, students who initially scored 62.5 improved to 81.25 or higher in the subsequent assessments. This score increase suggests students' self-confidence grew as they gained more experience with the multimodal presentation format. Studies support the idea that project-based learning, especially when incorporating multimodal elements, boosts students' confidence in language learning by providing them with various means of expression (Heo & Hwang, 2018; Bartholomew & Ross, 2020; Zhang & Zou, 2023).

Consistency and Stability in Confidence

Many students demonstrated consistent scores above 81.25, indicating a stable level of confidence in speaking. Research on self-confidence in language learning suggests that consistency in performance can be linked to the increasing belief in one's abilities over time

(Benson, 2011). In the context of this project, students showed stable confidence levels, meaning that the multimodal approach likely contributed to their feeling of preparedness in speaking situations.

Positive Response to Multimodal Teaching Methods

The data also indicates a positive response to the multimodal teaching method. Combining digital presentations and visual aids helped students feel more capable and equipped to speak English. The use of multimodal strategies supports the development of speaking skills by offering students different forms of expression (Kern, 2014; Thorne & Payne, 2005; Smith & Lee, 2022). These strategies engage learners in a more interactive way, which can reduce anxiety and foster greater confidence in language production.

Student Behavior and Teacher Observations

Beyond the assessment scores, the teacher's observations corroborate the findings of increased student confidence. Initially, students were hesitant to speak, but as they engaged in the multimodal project, they became more willing to use English, even in informal settings like chatting with peers and teachers. This behavior aligns with studies on the impact of collaborative projects on language learners' confidence (Tharp, 2017). As students received support and feedback during the project, they began to feel more comfortable and motivated to speak English in various contexts.

Visual Documentation and Body Language

Visual documentation, including photos and videos, also supported these findings. At the start of the project, many students appeared nervous, avoided eye contact, and showed closed body language. As the project progressed, students began to display more open body language and use gestures while speaking, indicating increased self-confidence. This shift in non-verbal communication is consistent with findings from studies on the role of body language in language learning, where confident speakers tend to exhibit more expressive body language (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996; Ranjan, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The multimedia multimodal presentation project has shown efficacy in improving English speaking and boosting students' confidence. Students could develop foundational skills, including descriptive text, using technology and creative expression instead of relying solely on memorization and repetition. Working in a team environment also helped them address pronunciation difficulties, shyness, and vocabulary challenges. Though the project posed challenges, the combination of repeated practice, peer collaboration, and teacher support enabled students to confront these obstacles and make significant progress. The experience laid the building blocks for enduring confidence and validated the wealth of resources inherent in a multimodal approach to language acquisition.

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