

ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING COMPETENCE THROUGH BADAS-CLT: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH STUDY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Speaking competence is a crucial component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, many secondary school students face persistent difficulties in developing effective speaking skills due to psychological and instructional constraints. This study aimed to enhance students' speaking competence through the implementation of BADAS-CLT, an instructional approach that integrates Asset-Based Differentiated Learning and Communicative Language Teaching. Employing Classroom Action Research based on Kemmis and McTaggart's cyclical model, the study was conducted over three cycles involving 280 Grade XI students in Phase F at SMA Negeri 4 Pekalongan. Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods, including speaking assessments, classroom observations, reflective field notes, and non-cognitive questionnaires that measured students' attitudes toward speaking. The findings indicate significant improvements in both affective and cognitive aspects of speaking competence, as students demonstrated increased intrinsic motivation, greater confidence in expressing ideas, and reduced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, accompanied by measurable gains in speaking proficiency. The proportion of students categorized as requiring improvement decreased substantially by the end of the intervention, indicating the effectiveness of the instructional approach. Grounded in Communicative Language Teaching, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Self-Determination Theory, and differentiated instruction, BADAS-CLT created a supportive and engaging learning environment that promoted meaningful oral interaction and active participation. The study concludes that BADAS-CLT offers a pedagogically sound and practical framework for enhancing speaking competence in large EFL secondary classrooms and provides valuable implications for language teachers seeking theoretically grounded and contextually responsive instructional strategies.

Keywords: speaking competence, communicative language teaching, classroom action research

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking competence is a fundamental component of English language learning, as it reflects learners' ability to communicate meaningfully in real-life contexts. However, developing effective speaking skills remains a persistent challenge for many EFL learners, particularly in secondary school settings where psychological and instructional factors often limit oral participation. Based on speaking assessment data of Grade XI students in Phase F at SMA Negeri 4 Pekalongan, a critical issue was identified: 54% of the students demonstrated low speaking proficiency. Among the five speaking topics assessed, students showed adequate mastery only in short conversational exchanges (77%). These findings are further corroborated by non-cognitive assessment data concerning students' attitudes toward speaking

competence, which reveal that 53.2% of students frequently hesitate in their choice of words, while 72% report feeling embarrassed about their speaking ability.

Previous studies have consistently shown that speaking proficiency is closely associated with psychological factors such as anxiety, low learning motivation, and lack of self-confidence (Burns, 2017; Spada & Lightbown, 2010). Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) emphasizes that anxiety, stress, and nervousness can significantly impede students' speaking performance. Similarly, research by Brown (2001), Yan and Horwitz (2008), Dincer and Yesilyurt (2013), Othman and Shuqair (2013), and Bohlke (2014) indicates that low motivation, limited opportunities for speaking practice in the classroom, and inadequate vocabulary mastery are key contributors to poor speaking skills. Moreover, Salam et al. (2021) argue that fear of making mistakes can severely inhibit students' speaking development. Collectively, these factors tend to render students passive in classroom settings and lead them to avoid speaking tasks when prompted.

In response to the urgency of improving students' speaking competence, the teacher implemented BADAS-CLT, an instructional approach that integrates Asset-Based Differentiated Learning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This approach enables teachers to design instruction that accommodates students' readiness levels, interests, and learning styles (Tomlinson, 1995). To enhance the effectiveness of differentiated instruction, existing assets within the school environment should be optimally utilized (Forrester, 2022; Forrester et al., 2018; Missingham, 2017). Furthermore, the application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) prioritizes meaningful and authentic communication over the mere mastery of grammatical structures and vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2016).

CLT emphasizes the development of communicative competence through meaningful interaction and authentic language use, positioning speaking as both the means and goal of language learning (Canale & Swain, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 2016). Through communicative tasks, learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning, express ideas, and engage actively in oral interaction, which is essential for improving fluency and confidence. In addition to instructional design, affective variables play a critical role in speaking performance. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis posits that emotional factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence can hinder language acquisition by restricting learners' ability to process and produce language. When the affective filter is lowered, learners are more likely to participate actively and take risks in speaking. This theoretical perspective provides a strong explanation for the speaking difficulties identified in the preliminary data and highlights the importance of creating a supportive and non-threatening learning environment.

Motivation is further explained through Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that learners' intrinsic motivation increases when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The researcher found that in EFL speaking contexts, instructional practices that offer meaningful choices,

appropriate challenges, and collaborative opportunities are more likely to enhance learners' engagement and willingness to communicate. Differentiated instruction, as proposed by Tomlinson (1995), complements this perspective by allowing teachers to adapt content, process, and learning products according to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, thereby reducing performance pressure and promoting learner confidence. Integrating these theoretical perspectives, BADAS-CLT conceptualizes speaking instruction as a dynamic interaction between communicative practice, affective support, learner motivation, and instructional differentiation. This integrated framework underpins the instructional intervention implemented in this study and informs the design of the Classroom Action Research described in the following methodology section.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) following the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which emphasizes systematic reflection and continuous improvement through iterative instructional cycles. CAR was selected to address the identified problem of low speaking proficiency by implementing and evaluating pedagogical interventions within an authentic classroom setting. Furthermore, the participants of the study were 280 Grade XI students in Phase F at SMA Negeri 4 Pekalongan. The students were involved as research participants due to their low level of speaking competence, as indicated by preliminary speaking assessments and non-cognitive evaluation results. All participants took part in the intervention to ensure consistency in instructional implementation and comprehensive observation of learning outcomes across classes.

The research was conducted over three action research cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection, in accordance with the Kemmis and McTaggart framework. During the planning stage, instructional designs, learning materials, and assessment instruments were developed based on the BADAS-CLT approach, which integrates Asset-Based Differentiated Learning and Communicative Language Teaching principles. In the action stage, the planned instructional strategies were implemented during regular English classroom sessions. In the observation stage, the researcher focused on systematically monitoring students' speaking performance, participation, and engagement using structured observation sheets, speaking assessment rubrics, and field notes. In the reflection stage, data from each cycle were analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional actions and to identify necessary revisions for subsequent cycles.

Data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention. Quantitative data were obtained from students' speaking assessment scores administered at the end of each cycle to measure progress in speaking proficiency. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations, reflective journals, and documentation of students' responses

during learning activities. The researcher proved that the use of multiple data sources enabled triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the research findings. Data analysis was conducted by comparing students' speaking performance across cycles and interpreting observational data to identify changes in participation and confidence. The findings from each cycle informed reflective decisions and instructional refinements aimed at improving students' speaking competence.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The implementation of the BADAS-CLT approach across three Classroom Action Research cycles produced positive outcomes in both affective and cognitive aspects of students' speaking competence. In terms of affective outcomes, the intervention successfully enhanced students' intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning English. The researcher found that students demonstrated increased enthusiasm and active participation during learning activities conducted in multiple contexts, including classrooms, the school library, online sessions via Google Meet, and other school environments. They actively collaborated with peers, teachers, and relevant stakeholders during the completion of learning tasks and product development, indicating higher engagement and ownership of learning. Furthermore, students exhibited notable improvements in speaking confidence and comfort. Final non-cognitive assessment results, collected through a Google Form questionnaire, showed that students became more willing to express ideas orally, demonstrated greater self-confidence, and experienced reduced fear of making mistakes when speaking English. In addition, a comparison between pre- and post-intervention non-cognitive assessments revealed a clear positive shift in students' attitudes toward speaking by the end of the 2024 academic year.

After the implementation of BADAS-CLT, the proportion of students categorized as "requiring improvement" in speaking proficiency decreased from approximately 50% at the beginning of the study to 24% at the end of the intervention. This result showed that, BADAS-CLT effective enough in advancing students' speaking skill. Many students progressed into the "sufficient" proficiency category, indicating measurable improvement in speaking performance based on final assessment results. In addition to classroom-level outcomes, the instructional practice generated broader impacts. Moreover, students achieved a gold medal at the national-level Festival Sains & Bahasa Nasional (FSBN) 2024, reflecting extended academic and motivational benefits. After knowing the effective of BADAS-CLT, the researcher disseminated the finding through professional teacher forums (MGMP) at both senior and junior secondary levels.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the BADAS-CLT approach effectively enhances students' speaking competence by addressing both affective and

cognitive dimensions of language learning. The observed increase in student motivation, engagement, and speaking confidence supports previous research emphasizing the central role of psychological factors in oral language development (Burns, 2017; Spada & Lightbown, 2010). Consistent with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, the use of meaningful, collaborative, and context-based speaking activities facilitated more authentic language use and increased student participation. Similar outcomes have been reported by Dincer and Yesilyurt (2013) and Bohlke (2014), who found that communicative classroom practices significantly improved learners' willingness to speak and reduced classroom passivity. This study extends their findings by demonstrating that communicative practices become more effective when combined with asset-based differentiated learning, which acknowledges students' existing strengths and learning preferences.

The significant reduction in students' anxiety and fear of making mistakes aligns with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that emotional variables such as anxiety and self-confidence can either facilitate or hinder language acquisition. Previous studies by Yan and Horwitz (2008) and Othman and Shuqair (2013) reported that speaking anxiety negatively affects oral performance and participation. The present findings corroborate these results while also suggesting that differentiated instruction and supportive learning environments can actively lower affective barriers, thereby enabling more sustained oral engagement.

In contrast to studies that highlight limited classroom speaking practice as a persistent issue (Brown, 2001; Salam et al., 2021), this study demonstrates that structured, asset-based communicative activities can increase speaking opportunities even within large classes. The decrease in students classified as "requiring improvement" from 50% to 24% indicates that instructional design, rather than class size alone, plays a crucial role in determining speaking outcomes. This finding adds nuance to earlier research by showing that pedagogical strategy can mitigate contextual constraints.

Furthermore, the observed growth in students' intrinsic motivation reflects principles of self-determination theory, particularly the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. Previous research has shown that learners who experience autonomy and meaningful interaction are more likely to engage in speaking tasks (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011). This study supports and extends these findings by demonstrating that asset-based differentiation enhances motivation by validating learners' identities and capabilities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of Asset-Based Differentiated Learning and Communicative Language Teaching (BADAS-CLT) effectively improves EFL students' speaking competence by addressing both affective and cognitive challenges. Grounded in CLT, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Self-Determination Theory, and differentiated instruction, the intervention enhanced students' motivation,

confidence, and willingness to communicate while reducing anxiety and fear of making mistakes. The findings indicate that meaningful communicative practice supported by differentiated, asset-oriented instruction can significantly improve speaking performance, even in large secondary school classrooms. By situating speaking development within a supportive and motivating learning environment, BADAS-CLT offers a pedagogically sound and practical framework for addressing persistent speaking difficulties in EFL contexts. Future research may extend this approach across different educational settings and research designs to further validate its effectiveness and sustainability.

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