



Enhancing EFL students' speaking skills through animated movies: A quasi-experimental study in an Indonesian senior high school

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in English language learning; however, many EFL learners experience difficulties in developing oral communication due to limited exposure to authentic language input and insufficient opportunities for meaningful interaction. This study investigated the effect of animated movies on students' speaking skills at SMAK Harapan Denpasar. Employing a quantitative approach, the study adopted a quasi-experimental design with a posttest-only control group design. The participants consisted of 70 tenth-grade students selected through cluster random sampling, with 34 students assigned to the experimental group and 36 students to the control group. The experimental group received instruction through animated movies, whereas the control group was taught using conventional methods. Data were collected through an oral speaking test assessed using an analytic scoring rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved a higher mean score ($M = 74.41$, $SD = 12.54$) than the control group ($M = 66.52$, $SD = 14.18$). An independent-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(68) = 2.46$, $p = .017$. Furthermore, the effect size analysis yielded a Cohen's d value of 0.589, indicating a moderate effect. These findings suggest that animated movies can serve as an effective instructional medium for enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills by providing authentic language exposure and increasing learner engagement. The study recommends integrating animated movies with communicative classroom activities to support speaking development in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Animated movies, Speaking skills, EFL learners, Audio-visual media, Quasi-experimental study

Introduction

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important language skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, feelings, and information effectively in various contexts. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, speaking serves as both a learning objective and an indicator of communicative competence. The ability to speak English successfully reflects learners' mastery of linguistic knowledge and their capacity to use the language meaningfully in real-life situations. Consequently, speaking has become a central component of English language teaching in many countries, including Indonesia. Despite its importance, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to develop due to limited exposure to authentic language use, insufficient opportunities for practice, and various linguistic and psychological barriers.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language rather than a second language. As a result, learners have relatively limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Although English has been formally taught from secondary education to higher education levels, many students still experience difficulties in oral communication. Previous studies have reported that Indonesian learners often struggle with vocabulary limitations, pronunciation problems, grammatical inaccuracies, and lack of confidence when speaking English (Lauder, 2008; Mudra, 2020). These challenges frequently prevent students from expressing their ideas fluently and accurately. Furthermore, learners often fear making mistakes, which reduces their willingness to participate in speaking activities. Such conditions indicate that speaking instruction requires innovative pedagogical approaches that can provide meaningful language exposure and create supportive learning environments.

The success of speaking instruction is influenced not only by students' language competence but also by the teaching methods and learning resources employed by teachers. Traditional speaking instruction often emphasizes memorization, repetition, translation, and mechanical drills. While these activities may help learners



develop certain linguistic aspects, they frequently fail to provide authentic communicative experiences. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that language learning should move beyond drill-based activities and focus on meaningful communication. Similarly, contemporary language teaching emphasizes communicative competence rather than merely linguistic accuracy. Therefore, teachers are expected to create learning experiences that encourage active participation, authentic communication, and meaningful interaction.

The rapid development of educational technology has significantly transformed language teaching and learning practices. Technological advancements have introduced various digital tools and multimedia resources that can enrich classroom instruction and improve student engagement. The integration of technology into language learning has become increasingly important, particularly in the twenty-first century, where digital literacy and technological competence are considered essential skills. Educational technologies provide opportunities for learners to access authentic materials, interact with multimedia content, and engage in more dynamic learning experiences. In language education, multimedia resources have been found to facilitate language acquisition by presenting information through multiple channels, including visual, auditory, and textual modes. Among various technological resources, audio-visual media have attracted considerable attention in English language teaching. Audio-visual materials combine sound and visual elements, enabling learners to receive information through multiple sensory channels simultaneously. According to Moreno and Mayer (2007), multimedia learning environments facilitate knowledge construction because learners process information through both verbal and visual systems. This principle is also supported by Dual Coding Theory, which suggests that information presented through verbal and visual representations is more likely to be retained and recalled effectively. Consequently, audio-visual media can enhance learners' comprehension, engagement, and language development.

In the context of language learning, audio-visual media offer several pedagogical advantages. They provide authentic language input, expose learners to natural pronunciation and intonation patterns, and present language in meaningful contexts. Moreover, audio-visual materials can increase students' motivation and participation because they are generally perceived as more interesting than traditional instructional resources. Previous studies have reported that audio-visual media can improve various language skills, including listening, speaking, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. By combining visual and auditory stimuli, such media help learners understand language use in authentic communicative situations and facilitate the development of communicative competence. One form of audio-visual media that has gained increasing popularity in language education is movies. Movies offer authentic linguistic input and expose learners to real-life communication, cultural practices, and social interactions. They provide rich contexts in which language is used naturally, allowing learners to observe how speakers communicate in different situations. In addition, movies present non-verbal communication cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language that support language comprehension. These features make movies valuable instructional resources for language learning, particularly for developing speaking skills.

Among various types of movies, animated movies possess unique characteristics that make them particularly suitable for educational purposes. Animated movies often present engaging storylines, attractive visual elements, and simplified language that is accessible to language learners. Furthermore, animated characters typically demonstrate clear pronunciation and expressive speech, making it easier for learners to understand spoken language. Hofmann (2018) argues that animated films can stimulate learners' imagination and creativity while simultaneously promoting language development. Similarly, Canning-Wilson (2000) suggests that animated movies can attract students' attention and increase their motivation to learn because they combine entertainment and educational value. The effectiveness of animated movies can also be explained through Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2009). The theory proposes that learners achieve deeper understanding when information is presented through both visual and auditory channels rather than through a single mode. Animated movies provide visual representations, spoken language, contextual situations, and emotional engagement simultaneously. This combination enables learners to process information more effectively and facilitates language acquisition. Through repeated exposure to authentic conversations, learners can acquire new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop greater awareness of communicative patterns. Another important



advantage of animated movies is their role in providing authentic language input. Authentic materials are widely regarded as beneficial resources in language education because they expose learners to natural language use and real communicative contexts. According to Ozverir et al. (2016), authentic materials help learners understand how language functions in real-world situations. In speaking instruction, authentic input is particularly important because it allows learners to observe conversational strategies, discourse patterns, and pragmatic features that may not be adequately represented in textbooks. Animated movies provide opportunities for learners to hear authentic expressions, observe communicative interactions, and develop familiarity with everyday language use.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of movie-based learning on language development. Chaya and Inpin (2020) found that Movie-Based Mobile Learning significantly improved Thai university students' speaking skills and intercultural communicative competence. Adillatunnisa et al. (2021) reported that short movies positively affected students' speaking performance, while Sinaga and Asnawi (2022) found that cartoon movies significantly improved learners' speaking ability with a strong effect size. Similarly, Halawa et al. (2022) concluded that English movies positively influenced students' speaking skills, and Manik and Salamuddin (2023) reported substantial improvements in speaking achievement among students who learned through movie-based instruction. Collectively, these studies indicate that movies can serve as effective instructional tools for enhancing speaking competence.

Despite the growing body of literature supporting the use of movies in language learning, several gaps remain. First, many previous studies have focused on general movies, short films, or movie-based mobile learning, whereas relatively limited attention has been given specifically to animated movies in Indonesian senior high school contexts. Second, although previous studies have reported positive outcomes, differences in educational settings, learner characteristics, and instructional procedures make it difficult to generalize findings across contexts. Third, limited empirical evidence is available regarding the effectiveness of animated movies for improving speaking skills among Indonesian EFL learners at the secondary school level. Therefore, further investigation is necessary to determine whether animated movies can significantly contribute to speaking development in this context. Addressing this gap is important because Indonesian EFL learners continue to face challenges in speaking English despite ongoing efforts to improve language instruction. Identifying effective instructional media can help teachers create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Animated movies represent a potentially valuable resource because they combine authentic language exposure, visual support, and motivational elements. However, empirical evidence is needed to support their implementation in classroom practice. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the effect of animated movies on students' speaking skills at SMAK Harapan Denpasar. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether students who learned through animated movies would achieve significantly higher speaking performance than those who received conventional instruction. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on technology-enhanced language learning and provide practical implications for English teachers seeking effective strategies for teaching speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design, specifically a posttest-only control group design. The design was selected to investigate the effect of animated movies on students' speaking skills by comparing the posttest performance of an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction using animated movies, whereas the control group was taught through conventional teaching methods.

Participants

The study was conducted at SMAK Harapan Denpasar. The population consisted of 212 tenth-grade students. Cluster random sampling was employed to select the research participants. Through a lottery system, Class X IPS 4 ($n = 34$) was assigned as the experimental group, while Class X IPA 2 ($n = 36$) served as the control group, resulting in a total sample of 70 students.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected using an oral speaking test assessed through an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Brown (2004). The rubric evaluated four aspects of speaking performance: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Lesson plans were also developed to guide the implementation of the treatment in both groups. The study was conducted in several stages. First, the sample classes were selected through cluster random sampling. Second, the research instruments were prepared and validated. Third, the experimental group received instruction using animated movies, while the control group received conventional instruction. After eight instructional meetings, both groups completed a posttest to measure their speaking performance.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize students' speaking performance. Prior to hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions for parametric analysis. An independent-samples t-test was then employed to examine the difference between the two groups. Additionally, Cohen's *d* was calculated to determine the magnitude of the treatment effect.

Findings and Discussion

The descriptive statistics of the posttest scores are presented in Table 1. Students in the experimental group achieved a higher mean score than those in the control group. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 74.41 (SD = 12.54), whereas the control group obtained a mean score of 66.52 (SD = 14.18). In addition, the experimental group showed a slightly narrower score range (45) than the control group (50). These results indicate that students who learned through animated movies tended to perform better in speaking than those who received conventional instruction.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Posttest Scores

Group	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range
Experimental (n = 34)	74.41	12.54	50	95	45
Control (n = 36)	66.52	14.18	45	95	50

As shown in Table 1, students in the experimental group obtained a higher mean score ($M = 74.41$, $SD = 12.54$) than those in the control group ($M = 66.52$, $SD = 14.18$). The difference suggests that students who were taught using animated movies performed better in speaking than those who received conventional instruction.

Inferential Statistics

Prior to hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted. The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the speaking scores of both groups were normally distributed ($p = .200$). In addition, Levene's test showed that the data were homogeneous ($p = .298$). Therefore, the assumptions for parametric testing were satisfied. An independent-samples t-test was subsequently conducted to determine whether the difference between the two groups was statistically significant.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test

Variable	t	df	p
Speaking score	2.46	68	.017

The analysis revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, $t(68) = 2.46$, $p = .017$. Since the significance value was lower than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding indicates that the use of animated movies had a significant effect on students' speaking skills. To examine the magnitude of the treatment effect, Cohen's *d* was calculated. The result showed an effect size of 0.589, indicating a moderate effect. This suggests that animated movies contributed meaningfully to students' speaking development.

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of animated movies on students' speaking skills. The findings revealed that students who received instruction through animated movies achieved significantly higher speaking scores than those who were taught through conventional methods. This finding indicates that animated



movies can serve as an effective instructional medium for enhancing speaking performance among EFL learners. The result supports the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of authentic and engaging learning materials in facilitating language acquisition and oral communication development (Albiladi et al., 2018; Kabooha, 2016).

One possible explanation for this improvement is the authentic language exposure provided by animated movies. Unlike traditional textbook-based instruction, animated movies present language in realistic communicative situations where learners are exposed to natural pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary use, and conversational expressions. Such exposure allows students to observe how English is used in authentic social interactions and facilitates the development of communicative competence. This finding is consistent with Kaiser (2011), who argues that movies provide learners with opportunities to encounter authentic language and cultural contexts that are often absent from conventional classroom materials. Similarly, Li and Wang (2015) maintain that movie-based learning enables students to experience language in a real communicative environment, thereby enhancing their language use and communication skills.

The effectiveness of animated movies can also be explained through Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer, 2009), which posits that learning becomes more effective when information is presented through both visual and auditory channels. In animated movies, learners simultaneously process spoken language, visual actions, facial expressions, and contextual cues. This multimodal input helps students comprehend meaning more easily and supports the retention of new linguistic forms. Moreno and Mayer (2007) further suggest that combining verbal and visual information facilitates deeper cognitive processing and improves learning outcomes. Consequently, students who learned through animated movies may have benefited from richer input than those who relied solely on conventional instructional materials.

Another factor contributing to the effectiveness of animated movies is their potential to enrich learners' vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in speaking because learners cannot effectively express their ideas without adequate lexical resources (Nation, 2019). Through repeated exposure to movie dialogues, students encounter new words and expressions in meaningful contexts, making vocabulary acquisition more natural and memorable. This finding is in line with Khoshniyat and Dowlatabadi (2014), who reported that English movies help learners expand their vocabulary repertoire and improve overall language proficiency. Likewise, Ashcroft et al. (2018) found that learners can acquire vocabulary incidentally while watching movies, particularly when words are repeatedly presented in comprehensible contexts. The findings may also be attributed to the motivational benefits of animated movies. Compared to conventional teaching methods, animated movies provide visually appealing and entertaining content that can capture learners' attention and sustain their interest throughout the learning process. Motivation has long been recognized as a key factor influencing language learning success because motivated learners tend to participate more actively and engage more deeply in classroom activities. Ismaili (2013) argues that movies create an enjoyable learning environment that promotes participation and interaction among learners. Similarly, Alolaywi (2023) emphasizes that movies can increase learners' motivation by bringing authenticity, variety, and enjoyment into the language classroom. During the implementation of the treatment, students appeared more enthusiastic and willing to participate in speaking activities, suggesting that animated movies created a more engaging learning atmosphere.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies investigating the role of movie-based learning in language education. Chaya and Inpin (2020) found that movie-based mobile learning significantly enhanced Thai university students' speaking skills and intercultural communicative competence. Similarly, Adillatunnisa et al. (2021) reported that the use of short movies had a significant positive effect on students' speaking performance. In another study, Sinaga and Asnawi (2022) found that animated movies significantly improved students' speaking ability and produced a strong effect size. The findings of the present study further strengthen the evidence supporting the effectiveness of movie-based instruction, particularly in the context of Indonesian secondary education. Despite the positive findings, the effect size obtained in this study was categorized as moderate rather than large. This suggests that speaking performance is influenced by multiple factors beyond instructional media alone. Students' prior language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, confidence, learning motivation, and opportunities for language practice may also contribute to speaking achievement. Brown (2007) emphasizes that



speaking competence is a multidimensional construct involving fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Therefore, although animated movies can provide meaningful support for speaking development, they should be integrated with other communicative teaching strategies to maximize learning outcomes. Overall, the findings highlight the pedagogical value of animated movies in EFL classrooms. By providing authentic language input, contextualized communication models, and engaging learning experiences, animated movies can create favorable conditions for speaking development. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate animated movies into speaking instruction and complement them with interactive activities such as role-plays, discussions, presentations, and collaborative tasks. Such integration may help students develop not only linguistic competence but also confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of animated movies on students' speaking skills at SMAK Harapan Denpasar. The findings demonstrated that students who received instruction through animated movies achieved significantly better speaking performance than those who were taught through conventional methods. The results indicate that animated movies can serve as an effective instructional medium for improving EFL learners' speaking skills. The positive effect of animated movies may be attributed to their ability to provide authentic language input, contextualized communication models, and engaging learning experiences. Through exposure to natural pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversational expressions, students were given greater opportunities to develop their speaking competence in meaningful contexts. In addition, the visual and entertaining nature of animated movies appeared to increase learners' motivation and participation during speaking activities.

The findings contribute to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning by providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of animated movies in an Indonesian EFL context. Pedagogically, the study suggests that English teachers should consider incorporating animated movies into speaking instruction and integrating them with communicative activities such as discussions, role-plays, and presentations to maximize students' learning outcomes. Despite the positive findings, the study was limited by its relatively small sample size and short treatment duration. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger participant groups, longer intervention periods, and additional variables that may influence speaking development, such as learners' motivation, self-confidence, and language proficiency. Such studies may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how animated movies can support speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

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