



# The Effect Of English Central On Students' Speaking Ability

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## ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the effect of the EnglishCentral platform on students' speaking ability, focusing on vocabulary accuracy and pronunciation accuracy among eighth-grade learners at SMP Negeri 17 Medan. A quantitative pre-experimental design was employed, with a pre-test and post-test control group design. Two groups were selected via cluster random sampling: a control group comprising 26 learners and an experimental group comprising 30 learners. Participants were instructed to deliver spoken responses lasting two to three minutes on opinion-based topics. In the experimental class, the EnglishCentral platform served as the primary instructional medium, providing authentic video-based content, native-speaker pronunciation models, and instant automated speech recognition feedback. Descriptive statistics, normality tests (Shapiro-Wilk), homogeneity tests (Levene), and paired-sample t-tests were conducted to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the experimental group's mean vocabulary score rose from 66.77 (pre-test) to 73.77 (post-test), while pronunciation scores increased from 65.87 to 73.93. The paired samples t-test yielded a two-tailed significance value below 0.001 with a mean difference of - 6.18, confirming a statistically significant improvement. The control group's improvement, by contrast, was minimal (mean difference of 2.21). These outcomes confirm that integrating EnglishCentral into instruction produces measurable gains in vocabulary and pronunciation accuracy, particularly in the context of expressing and exchanging opinions

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The four main English skills are writing, reading, listening, and speaking. English speaking poses a significant challenge for many students. Although some are proficient in writing, they struggle with verbal communication, which can lower their confidence (Li et al., 2025). Lack of speaking practice often leads to anxiety and feelings of unpreparedness when using English in real-life situations. Effective learning methods should therefore offer opportunities for independent speaking practice to help students build confidence both inside and outside the classroom (Hermaniar & Azkiya, 2021).

Many schools in Indonesia still rely on traditional English teaching methods that emphasize theory, grammar, and vocabulary, while giving little attention to speaking practice, leading to a gap in students' speaking abilities (Pratiwi et al., 2024). As a result, students often lack confidence in speaking due to limited exposure to interactive activities. Although they may have a strong understanding of grammar and vocabulary, their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations remains weak, indicating the need for more practical, speaking-focused instruction (Li et al., 2025).

Ramadhan (2023) emphasizes that the integration of technology, including language learning applications and online platforms, can be a valuable means to boost student engagement in speaking practice. With the rapid growth of technology, platforms like EnglishCentral offer valuable tools for enhancing students' English skills. EnglishCentral promotes interactive learning through videos that enhance pronunciation and vocabulary. Its speech recognition feature gives instant feedback, supporting speaking practice in a low-pressure environment.

Classroom observations conducted during the PLP 2 program at SMP Negeri 17 Medan in September 2024 showed that most students remained passive during speaking activities, with very few willing to communicate in English without being prompted by the teacher. To address this issue, the EnglishCentral application was introduced as a technology-based tool aimed at enhancing English skills, especially in speaking. Research by Muhamad Idrus (2021) showed that AI applications like Google Lens significantly improved

speaking ability, while Madhavi (2023) found that employing digital platforms led to substantial enhancements in learners' oral proficiency. These prior studies support the use of technology-based platforms for improving students' speaking abilities.

The present study seeks to examine how the EnglishCentral platform influences the oral proficiency of eighth-grade learners at SMP Negeri 17 Medan. This investigation assessed whether a notable disparity in oral competence exists between learners exposed to EnglishCentral and those receiving traditional instructional approaches, with a focus on vocabulary accuracy and pronunciation accuracy.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group design. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 17 Medan with eighth-grade students as the population. Two groups were selected via cluster random sampling: a control group comprising 26 learners and an experimental group comprising 30 learners.

The research instrument was a speaking test administered in three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Participants were instructed to deliver spoken responses lasting two to three minutes, involving the presentation of topics along with the articulation of personal viewpoints supported by justifications and counterarguments. The speaking scores were assessed based on two components: vocabulary accuracy and pronunciation accuracy. In the experimental class, the EnglishCentral platform was used as the instructional medium. Students accessed authentic video-based materials, received pronunciation models from native speakers, and obtained immediate feedback on their speaking errors. The control class received conventional classroom instruction without the application.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine the distribution and mean scores of pre-test and post-test results. Normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk method, and homogeneity was tested using Levene's test. The Paired Samples t-test was then applied to determine whether significant differences existed between pre-test and post-test scores in both groups.

## **RESULTS**

This section presents the findings from statistical analyses, including descriptive data from pre-test and post-test scores in both the control and experimental classes, normality test, homogeneity test, and paired samples test.

## Pre-Test Scores of Control Class

*Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Mean of Pre-Test Scores in the Control Class*

Score Interval	Classification	Vocabulary f (%)	Pronunciation f (%)	Total f (%)
91-100	Excellent	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
75-90	Very Good	1 (3.85)	1 (3.85)	1 (3.85)
61-74	Good	15 (57.69)	12 (46.15)	16 (61.54)
51-60	Average	10 (38.46)	11 (42.31)	9 (34.61)
0-50	Poor	0 (0)	2 (7.69)	0 (0)
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>63.27</b>	<b>61.54</b>	<b>62.38</b>	<b>100</b>

Referring to Table 1, the majority of learners fell within the Good range (scores of 61 to 74) across all measured components. Regarding vocabulary accuracy, 15 students (57.69%) fell in the Good category, and 10 students (38.46%) in the Average category. The computed mean for vocabulary stood at 63.27. For pronunciation, 12 students (46.15%) were in the Good category and 11 students (42.31%) in the Average category, with a mean of 61.54. The overall mean pre-test score was 62.38, indicating that students' initial speaking ability in the control class was generally at a Good level.

## Post-Test Scores of Control Class

*Table 2. Frequency Distribution and Mean of Post-Test Scores in the Control Class*

Score Interval	Classification	Vocabulary f (%)	Pronunciation f (%)	Total f (%)
91-100	Excellent	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
75-90	Very Good	1 (3.85)	1 (3.85)	1 (3.85)
61-74	Good	16 (61.54)	13 (50.00)	10 (38.46)
51-60	Average	9 (34.61)	12 (46.15)	15 (57.69)
0-50	Poor	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>61.85</b>	<b>59.65</b>	<b>60.88</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on Table 2, most students in the control class were in the Average (51-60) and Good (61-74) categories following the instructional period. The mean vocabulary score was 61.85, while the mean pronunciation score was 59.65. The overall mean post-test score was 60.88, showing that speaking ability of control class students after instruction remained at an Average level. These results indicate minimal improvement without the EnglishCentral treatment.

### Pre-Test Scores of Experimental Class

*Table 3. Frequency Distribution and Mean of Pre-Test Scores in the Experimental Class*

Score Interval	Classification	Vocabulary f (%)	Pronunciation f (%)	Total f (%)
91-100	Excellent	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
75-90	Very Good	10 (33.33)	12 (40.00)	11 (36.67)
61-74	Good	16 (53.33)	15 (50.00)	16 (53.33)
51-60	Average	4 (13.33)	3 (10.00)	3 (10.00)
0-50	Poor	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>66.77</b>	<b>65.87</b>	<b>66.32</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that most experimental class students were in the Good category for both vocabulary (16 students, 53.33%) and pronunciation (15 students, 50.00%), with mean scores of 66.77 and 65.87 respectively. The overall pre-test mean of 66.32 demonstrates that students entered the treatment phase with adequate speaking foundation.

### Post-Test Scores of Experimental Class

*Table 4. Frequency Distribution and Mean of Post-Test Scores in the Experimental Class*

Score Interval	Classification	Vocabulary f (%)	Pronunciation f (%)	Total f (%)
91-100	Excellent	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
75-90	Very Good	16 (53.33)	18 (60.00)	17 (56.67)
61-74	Good	14 (46.67)	12 (40.00)	13 (43.33)
51-60	Average	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
0-50	Poor	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>73.77</b>	<b>73.93</b>	<b>73.85</b>	<b>100</b>
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Table 4 demonstrates a marked advancement following the EnglishCentral treatment. For vocabulary, 16 students (53.33%) achieved Very Good and 14 (46.67%) achieved Good, with a mean of 73.77. For pronunciation, 18 students (60.00%) achieved Very Good, with a mean of 73.93. The overall mean of 73.85 indicates that all students achieved scores within the Good to Very Good categories, confirming positive impact of the instructional approach.

### Normality Test

*Table 5. Tests of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Pre-Test Control	.924	26	.056
Post-Test Control	.951	26	.242
Pre-Test Experiment	.949	30	.156
Post-Test Experiment	.958	30	.269

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted given that each group had fewer than 50 participants. The results yielded significance values of 0.056 and 0.242 for the control group's pre-test and post-test respectively, and 0.156 and 0.269 for the experimental group. All values exceeded 0.05, confirming that the datasets follow a normal distribution and qualify for parametric statistical analysis.

### Homogeneity Test

The Levene's test for homogeneity of variance yielded a significance value of 0.100 based on the mean, exceeding the 0.05 threshold. Additional checks based on the median (0.118), median with adjusted df (0.118), and trimmed mean (0.105) also exceeded 0.05. These results confirm that the data satisfy the homogeneity requirement for parametric analysis.

### Paired Samples Test

*Table 6. Paired Samples Test Results*

<b>Pair</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Two-Sided p</b>
Pre-Post Control	2.211	4.851	25	<.001
Pre-Post Experiment	-6.177	-8.061	29	<.001

The paired-sample t-test results in Table 6 show that both groups produced two-tailed significance values below 0.001, confirming statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores. The control group showed a mean difference of 2.21 points, indicating modest improvement without specialized treatment. The experimental group demonstrated a mean difference of -6.18, meaning post-test scores surpassed pre-test scores by a substantially wider margin, confirming that EnglishCentral produced a more substantial gain in oral proficiency.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The statistical analysis revealed that both the control and experimental groups demonstrated significant differences between their pre-test and post-test scores. Within the control group, the paired-sample t-test yielded a two-tailed significance value below 0.001, with a mean difference of 2.21 points, indicating a modest improvement through conventional instruction. In contrast, the experimental group showed a mean difference of -6.18, demonstrating a substantially larger gain in oral proficiency following instruction delivered through the EnglishCentral platform.

From the researcher's perspective, the significant improvement in the experimental class was attributed to the characteristics of learning through the EnglishCentral application, which provided authentic video-based materials, native-speaker pronunciation models, and immediate feedback on students' pronunciation errors. These features encouraged students to practice speaking more actively, increased their confidence, and helped them understand and correct mistakes in vocabulary use and pronunciation.

These outcomes align with principles drawn from communicative approaches to language acquisition, which underscore the value of genuine interaction, exposure to real-world linguistic materials, and active participation by learners as key drivers for advancing oral proficiency. Furthermore, these results find support in theories concerning multimedia

instruction, which propose that educational effectiveness increases when content is delivered through several sensory pathways concurrently. By weaving together visual imagery, auditory signals, written text, and interactive components, the EnglishCentral platform allows students to engage with linguistic input at a deeper cognitive level.

These findings were in line with Hasibuan (2025), who reported that EnglishCentral effectively improved students' speaking ability through authentic video materials and pronunciation feedback. Moreover, the findings were supported by Zhao, Noordin, and Khaissa (2024), who concluded that mobile-assisted language learning was effective in enhancing English speaking skills. Another study by Handikaningtyas (2025) also showed that technology-based learning applications with speech recognition features improved students' pronunciation accuracy.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study investigated the effect of the EnglishCentral platform on the speaking ability of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 17 Medan, focusing on vocabulary accuracy and pronunciation accuracy. The descriptive analysis revealed that prior to the instructional period, learners' oral proficiency fell within a moderate-to-satisfactory range across both groups. The control group's mean score shifted minimally from 62.38 (pre-test) to 60.88 (post-test), while the experimental group demonstrated a substantial advance from 66.32 to 73.85.

Application of the paired-sample t-test produced evidence of meaningful discrepancies between pre- and post-test scores in both groups. For the control group, the two-tailed significance value fell below 0.001 with a mean difference of 2.21 points, indicating slight improvement through conventional instruction. In the experimental group, the significance value likewise registered below 0.001 with a mean shift of -6.18, demonstrating substantially higher final assessment outcomes compared to the initial evaluation.

Accordingly, it is concluded that deploying the EnglishCentral platform yields a meaningful and positive impact on advancing learners' oral proficiency, specifically regarding lexical range and articulatory precision. The gains realized by participants in the experimental group exceeded those observed in the control group, confirming that this digital tool serves as an effective resource for strengthening spoken communication abilities.

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