

THE EFFECT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING-BASED ON IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

¹Tiyas Oktaviana, ²Ahmad Nur Syafiq, ³Anwari

^{1,2,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Kudus, Jl Ganesha I Purwosari Kudus, 0291 437218

e-mail: tyasoktaviana@umkudus.ac.id

Abstract

This research paper investigated the effectiveness of an Experiential Learning (EL) intervention on the English-speaking skills of kindergarten teachers at TK PAPB Semarang. Using a one-group pretest-posttest design with six teachers, the research assessed skills in pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and accuracy. Results showed a statistically significant improvement in overall speaking competence, with post-test scores increasing by an average of five points ($p = 0.010$). This confirms the EL approach, which utilized role-plays and simulations, was effective in enhancing teacher performance. However, high standard deviations in post-test scores, especially for pronunciation, indicated that significant ability disparities among participants persisted. The study concludes that while EL is a valuable strategy, future interventions should integrate more personalized, differentiated instruction to address the needs of heterogeneous learner groups.

Keywords: Experiential Learning (EL), Speaking Skill, and Kindergarten teacher

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INTRODUCTION

The English language proficiency, particularly speaking skills, has become an essential competency in the globalization era, including in the field of early childhood education (PAUD). Kindergarten (TK) teachers play a strategic role in introducing the fundamentals of English to their students. This role is increasingly important given that English not only serves as a communication tool but also as a gateway to global sources of knowledge (Maulidah, 2018). However, various studies indicate that many kindergarten teachers in Indonesia, especially in the Preschool Education environment, face challenges in mastering effective English speaking skills (Hidayani et al., 2023). Speaking English as a foreign language is indeed challenging as it involves multiple components such as comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency (Lastari, et.al, 2024). This English language proficiency issue among kindergarten English teachers is influenced by several key factors. First, the lack of specific professional training for developing speaking skills among kindergarten teachers is a significant barrier (Mardiah & Wahyuni, 2024). Second, limited access to relevant innovative teaching methods causes teachers to struggle in obtaining learning models

that can be directly applied in classroom contexts. Third, self-doubt and anxiety in using English among teachers further exacerbate the situation (Resmini et al., 2020). As a result of these challenges, the quality of English language teaching at the kindergarten level remains suboptimal, causing young children to miss opportunities to acquire a strong foundation in English from an early age. There is a need for structured, sustainable, and relevant research tailored to the needs of kindergarten teachers. The Experiential Learning-Based, which emphasizes learning through direct experience, has proven effective in enhancing practical skills in various educational contexts (Kathryn Babb & Laurie Campbell, 2023). With this approach, it is hoped that teachers will not only improve their speaking abilities but also build confidence in applying English in their classrooms.

The Experiential Learning-Based offers a potential solution to this problem. Experiential Learning (EL) emphasizes learning through direct experience, where learners actively engage in the learning process (Abdul Rahim et al., 2020). Speaking activities in foreign language learning can be effective when learners can participate actively and evenly, are highly motivated and confident to speak as they can experience conversation in a comfortable non-threatening atmosphere (Hanim, 2018). By using the Experiential Learning approach, kindergarten teachers can enhance their speaking skills through various interactive activities, such as simulations, role-plays, group discussions, and direct teaching practices (Royani & Saputra, 2023). For example, classroom simulations help teachers practice English in realistic contexts, while role-plays naturally reinforce their understanding of language structures. The EL-based program is designed by integrating four core stages: concrete experience (real experience), reflective observation (reflective observation), abstract conceptualization (abstract conceptualization), and active experimentation (active experimentation). In the concrete experience stage, teachers encounter learning situations that require direct use of English, such as giving instructions to students. The reflective observation stage allows them to evaluate the experience, while abstract conceptualization helps in connecting the experience to relevant theories. Finally, active experimentation encourages teachers to try new methods in English teaching (Banawan et al., 2023). Moreover, the EL approach allows adaptation to the local needs of kindergarten teachers, who often have time and resource constraints. The emphasis on direct practice not only improves speaking skills but also provides additional motivation through immediately felt successes (Ajani, 2023). Thus, EL offers a holistic approach oriented toward continuous learning, making it highly relevant for the professional development of kindergarten teachers in Indonesia.

Previous research has explored various methods to improve teachers' English skills, such as the use of technology in learning (Widyatuti et al., 2022) and blended learning approaches that combine online and face-to-face learning (Uyun & Sinta, 2023). However, the specific application of the EL approach to enhance the speaking skills of kindergarten teachers is still rare, particularly in the Indonesian context. This opens opportunities for developing focused, EL-based research. The novelty of this research lies in several important aspects. First, the structured and targeted implementation of the EL approach specifically for developing the speaking skills of kindergarten teachers. Second, the integration of English materials with direct experiential learning practices in the classroom, designed to address real challenges faced by teachers in teaching contexts. Third, the development of specific evaluation tools aimed at objectively and continuously measuring the effectiveness of the EL program on the speaking skills of kindergarten teachers (Jameson et al., 2021).

The Effect of Experiential Learning-Based on Improving English Speaking Skills of Kindergarten Teachers

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Therefore, this research paper aims to examine the effect of The Experiential Learning-Based on improving English speaking skill for kindergarten teachers at TK PAPB Semarang

RESEARCH METHOD

This research paper employs a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach. In this design, one group of research subjects undergoes an initial test (pretest) to measure their baseline abilities, followed by treatment in the form of an Experiential Learning (EL)-based training program. After the treatment is completed, the group will undergo a final test (posttest) to evaluate the changes in their abilities, particularly in the aspect of speaking skills. This approach is chosen to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the EL-based training program without comparing it to a control group.

The population of this research consists of all 10 teachers at TK PAPB Semarang, while the research samples were 6 teachers selected using purposive sampling technique. Inclusion Criteria were :1) Kindergarten teachers who actively teach at TK PAPB during the research period and have at least 1 year of teaching experience, 2) Kindergarten teachers who have Willing to participate in all stages of the research program, including pretest, posttest, and EL-based training and possess motivation to improve English speaking skills. Meanwhile Exclusion Criteria were: 1) Kindergarten teachers who extended leave or not actively teaching during the research period, 2) Kindergarten teachers with physical limitations or health conditions that hinder participation in intensive training, and 3) Teachers who do not meet the completeness of data or documents required for research analysis.

Data collection is conducted through instruments including speaking ability tests, observation sheets, and semi-structured interviews. The speaking ability test is structured based on indicators relevant to the training curriculum, such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and communication skills.

Pretest and posttest data are analyzed using statistical tests, such as paired t-test or Wilcoxon test, to measure significant differences between initial and final abilities. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews and observations are used to provide additional insights into participants' experiences during the training, as well as the challenges they faced. This method allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive overview of the program's impact on the speaking abilities of kindergarten teachers effectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Description of Pre-Test Speaking Skill Scores

Table 1. Description of Pre-Test Speaking Skill Scores

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Pronunciation	6	45	92	70.50	17.695
Pre Intonation	6	50	88	69.17	14.204
Pre Fluency	6	52	90	70.83	14.892

Pre Accuracy	6	48	95	71.17	16.364
Valid N (listwise)	6				

Based on the descriptive statistical data of the pre-test results for English speaking skills of six participants, it can be seen that, in general, the participants' initial competence was at a moderate level, with average scores for the four aspects ranging between 69.17 and 71.17. The highest mean score was achieved in the Accuracy aspect (71.17), followed by Fluency (70.83), Pronunciation (70.50), and Intonation (69.17). Although differences exist across aspects, the gap between mean scores is relatively small, indicating that no aspect consistently outperformed or lagged significantly behind the others.

A deeper analysis of the data distribution reveals substantial variation in participants' abilities. The high standard deviations for all aspects—especially Pronunciation (17.695) and Accuracy (16.364)—indicate sharp disparities in ability among participants. This is further supported by the wide range of scores, with a 47-point gap in Pronunciation (45–92) and a 47-point gap in Accuracy (48–95). This condition illustrates a highly heterogeneous group, with participants who have achieved an advanced level learning alongside those at a basic level.

This statistical profile carries important implications for instructional planning. The large variation in abilities within this small group demands differentiated and personalized instructional approaches. Uniform instruction would not effectively accommodate the diverse learning needs of the participants. Learning activities should focus on providing differentiated practice, particularly for Pronunciation and Accuracy, which show the greatest variation, while maintaining instructional quality for Intonation and Fluency to ensure optimal improvement for all participants.

2. Description of Post-Test Speaking Skill Scores

Table 2. Description of Post-Test Speaking Skill Scores

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post Pronoun	6	45	95	75.33	18.619
Post Intonation	6	50	92	74.50	15.070
Post Fluency	6	52	94	76.00	15.937
Post Accuracy	6	48	96	75.83	16.546
Valid N (listwise)	6				

Based on the descriptive statistical data of the post-test results, a consistent improvement was observed in all aspects compared to the pre-test scores. The average post-test scores for the four aspects ranged from 74.50 to 76.00, with the highest score in Fluency (76.00), followed by Accuracy (75.83), Pronunciation (75.33), and Intonation (74.50). This increase of approximately 4–5 points for each aspect demonstrates the effectiveness of the instructional intervention provided.

The dispersion analysis indicates that the challenge of heterogeneity observed in the pre-test persisted in the post-test. High standard deviations, particularly in

Pronunciation (18.619) and Accuracy (16.546), indicate sustained disparities among participants. The wide ranges—50 points for Pronunciation (45–95) and 48 points for Accuracy (48–96)—emphasize that although averages increased, individual differences remained a critical issue requiring attention.

The pedagogical implication of these findings underscores the continued need for differentiated instruction in subsequent learning periods. Although the intervention successfully improved average performance, more targeted strategies are needed to bridge the skill gaps. Special attention should be given to Pronunciation, which shows the highest variance, while maintaining strong practice in the other three aspects to ensure balanced and sustainable improvement.

3. Hypothesis Testing Using Parametric Tests

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Using Parametric Tests

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Overall -	-	3.033	1.238	-8.183	-1.817	-	5	.010
	Post Overall	5.000					4.038		

The results show a statistically significant difference between PreOverall and PostOverall scores. The mean difference of -5.000 indicates that the PostOverall score was 5 points higher than the PreOverall score. The negative sign confirms this improvement. A p-value of 0.010 ($p < 0.05$) provides strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the difference is statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval (-8.183 to -1.817), which does not include zero, further supports the conclusion that the improvement was consistent. The t-value of -4.038 with $df = 5$ indicates the magnitude of improvement relative to the variation in data. These results strongly confirm the effectiveness of the intervention.

Discussion

Based on the descriptive findings, participants' initial speaking ability (pre-test) was at a moderate level, with an overall mean score of around 70. However, the most striking aspect was the high disparity in ability levels, particularly in pronunciation and accuracy, evidenced by large standard deviations and wide score ranges. This indicates a highly heterogeneous learning group where beginners and advanced learners coexist. Such a condition implies that uniform instruction is likely to be ineffective. This aligns with previous research, which suggests that when educators implement personalized learning strategies, particularly in language acquisition, they can significantly enhance overall student performance and engagement (Purnaningsih et al., 2013). For instance, incorporating varied instructional methods that cater to distinct learning styles can help bridge the gap between beginners and advanced learners, fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, targeted interventions focusing on specific areas such as pronunciation and accuracy could lead to improved outcomes, as evidenced by the positive correlation between tailored pedagogical approaches and student achievement in language skills (Wandira & Hadiansyah, 2022)

Following the intervention, the post-test results show consistent improvement, with an increase of 4–5 points across all speaking skill aspects. Fluency and accuracy emerged as the highest-scoring aspects. This suggests that the intervention successfully improved overall participant performance. However, further analysis shows that heterogeneity persisted. Despite improvements in means, the large standard deviations and wide ranges indicate that the intervention did not substantially reduce the gap between high- and low-performing learners. Pronunciation, in particular, showed increased variance, signaling a continued challenge. This persistent variability in pronunciation highlights the necessity for targeted interventions that cater to the diverse needs of learners, particularly those at different proficiency levels. For instance, the integration of AI-powered assessment tools, such as Speechace, has shown promise in providing personalized feedback that addresses specific pronunciation challenges, potentially bridging the gap between high- and low-performing students (Chaya & Inpin, 2020). Moreover, the effectiveness of such technology in language education suggests a shift towards more individualized learning experiences, where students can engage with their unique difficulties in real-time. As educators seek to refine their teaching strategies, embracing differentiated instruction alongside advanced technological tools may prove essential in fostering a more equitable language learning environment (Sun, 2023).

The result of the hypothesis test demonstrates that the instructional intervention effectively increased participants' speaking competence. This improvement is both statistically and substantively significant, validating the design and implementation of the intervention. It means that the use of the Experiential Learning-Based improves the speaking skill for kindergarten teachers. Furthermore, the implications of these findings extend beyond individual speaking competence; they suggest a transformative potential for pedagogical practices in early childhood education. By integrating experiential learning activities, such as role-playing and interactive storytelling, educators can create immersive environments that not only enhance language skills but also foster social-emotional development among young learners. This aligns with recent studies indicating that experiential approaches significantly improve speaking performance in diverse educational settings, as evidenced by the positive outcomes observed in students at DPA Kindergarten, where similar methods were employed (Nam et al., 2020). Embracing such innovative strategies may thus pave the way for a more dynamic and effective English language curriculum in kindergartens, ultimately preparing children for future academic success. Moreover, the integration of experiential learning strategies not only enhances language acquisition but also aligns with the holistic development goals outlined in early childhood education frameworks. By emphasizing a play-based and child-centered curriculum, as supported by recent research, educators can effectively nurture cognitive, social, and emotional skills simultaneously, creating a well-rounded foundation for children's future learning experiences (Kamelia Olga Litna et al., 2025). This approach encourages children to engage actively with their environment, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that are essential in today's rapidly changing world. Furthermore, as the demand for innovative educational practices grows, it becomes imperative for teacher training programs to incorporate these methodologies, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to implement such dynamic curricula in their classrooms (Saridewi, 2018).

Moreover, these findings highlight two implications: (1) the intervention worked and produced measurable improvement, and (2) persistent heterogeneity requires

future instruction to incorporate more systematic and personalized differentiation, perhaps through ability grouping, scaffolding, and targeted support, particularly in Pronunciation. Later on, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the very small sample size (n=6) restricts generalization. Second, despite improvement in mean scores, disparities among participants remained high, indicating that the intervention was not fully differentiated. Additionally, the absence of a control group limits the ability to attribute improvements solely to the intervention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Experiential Learning-Based intervention was successful in effectively improving the overall speaking competence of the kindergarten teacher participants. The statistically significant increase in post-test scores across all aspects of speaking skills validates the intervention's design and underscores the value of experiential learning strategies in professional development. These results suggest that such immersive, activity-based approaches have transformative potential for enhancing pedagogical practices in early childhood education. However, the study also reveals a critical limitation: the intervention did not substantially reduce the high disparity in ability levels among the participants. Despite the overall improvement, the group remained highly heterogeneous, with pronunciation persisting as a particular challenge. This indicates that a one-size-fits-all experiential learning approach is insufficient for addressing diverse learner needs. Therefore, future instructional efforts must incorporate more systematic and personalized differentiation, such as targeted scaffolding and ability grouping, to effectively bridge the gap between low- and high-performing learners.

To build upon these findings, future research should address the identified limitations. First, a study with a larger and more diverse sample size is necessary to enhance the generalizability of the results. Second, employing a quasi-experimental design with a control group would strengthen the validity of the findings and allow for a more robust attribution of the improvements to the intervention itself. Finally, researchers should investigate the specific impact of integrating personalized differentiation strategies, such as AI-powered pronunciation tools or ability-based scaffolding, within the experiential learning framework to determine their efficacy in reducing performance disparities in heterogeneous classrooms.

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