THE USE OF ENGLISH CONVERSATION JOURNAL (ECJ) TO IMPROVE STUDENTS’ SPEAKING PERFORMANCE IN BUSINESS ENGLISH COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This experimental research was intended to make an analysis and assessment toward the use of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) whether it is effective to improve students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication or not. The objectives of this study were to find out whether there are any significant differences between students who are taught by using ECJ and without ECJ in terms of students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication. The Researcher employed quantitative research with two groups consisting of pre-test and post-test groups through random sampling where Office Management students (OM-35) as control class and (OM-36) as experimental class. The result revealed that the mean difference is 11.75. It showed that the average result of students’ deviation score in Control and control groups was 69.50-81.25=-11.75. In other words, there are significant differences in students’ Speaking Performance in Business English Communication between those who were taught by using English Conversation Journal (ECJ) and those who were not. Therefore, improving student’s speaking performance in Business English Communication by using English Conversation Journal (ECJ) can be an alternative in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: business communication, conversation, speaking performance.

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The use of English Conversational Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in business English communication (M. Intan, K. A. Muthalib, & I. A. Samad)

INTRODUCTION

As one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, English has become the main target language studied in many schools and colleges around the world. In this case, Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pengembangan Profesi Indonesia (LP3I) College Banda Aceh, realized that by having English speaking ability their students will have additional skills that are needed in the working world to compete with others.

Considering the significance of English proficiency in the serious business world and its future possibilities, LP3I College Banda Aceh offers three significant subjects identified with English: General English for first and second semester students, Business English, and Business Correspondence for third and fourth semester students. These are planned to empower them to reinforce teamwork and contribute in the business company. Business English is intended for students to have the option to use English in discussions, business, and office correspondence (Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pengembangan Profesi Indonesia English Team [LP3I English Team], 2013). Business English aides understudy is not only in the authority of English for corporate world, but also additionally encourages them to have a relational relationship with individuals from assorted foundations, countries, and cultures. Brooks (2003) implies that Business English is not just training students with the most proficient method to improve their business language aptitudes, but, in addition, encourages them to grapple with social contrasts and business styles which may frequently be more valuable assets than obstructions.

The English Conversation Journal (ECJ) is a card with two pages containing 6 topics that aimed to improve students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication then strengthened by Conversation (Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pengembangan Profesi Indonesia English Team [LP3I English Team], 2015). ECJ is a set of records of news, events, and activities in English (Hornby, 1995). This is a medium used especially by LP3I to support CLL method implemented at the college. This card which is called English Conversation Journal was developed by curriculum designers of LP3I Head Quarter in Jakarta. This was first implemented in 2015.

The display of the card design presents topics and blank space that has to be filled with the students’ writing composition, score, signature, and date of delivery by the teacher. It also sequences for
other topics. The ECJ is a form of student additional activity that covers almost all of the topics of important material.

Students are expected to put or write ideas (as a composition journal) on every topic provided on each page of this ECJ not less than 10 sentences. Then, the students should submit and retell their composition by performing a presentation or conversation depending on the lecturer’s instruction. Despite this medium has been promoted at LP3I since 2015, there was no report on the success of the uses of the medium. This research was looking at whether the use of ECJ as a medium to support CLL learning has a positive impact on students’ speaking performance, especially in Business English Communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Ability

Speaking ability can be described as the ability of a person to express ideas. The structural aspect concentrates on the grammatical system, describing how linguistic items can be combined. It is understood that speaking is a very difficult and complex skill to learn, especially for foreign language students. There are many different abilities included in this skill. Hedges (2000, p. 110) says that speaking ability has four components: contents, fluency, eye contact, and pronunciation. In short, speaking involves different skills, which should be used simultaneously. Speaking is one of four language skills that have an important role in human life, so that mastery of speaking is very vital in language teaching. Campbell (1989, p. 39) stated speaking is an activity on the part of one individual to make oneself understood by another. This definition has the meaning that the person who becomes the speaker must use the tool of communication that can be understood by the listener.

Therefore, it can be inferred that speaking is applied communication and the speaker should use sentences that the listener can understand to avoid misunderstanding when the speaker expresses his ideas. Harmer (2007, p. 7) mentions in some classrooms speaking means that students repeat sentences or dialogues. It is important for learners to practice the language they are learning in a similar situation to life outside the classroom. They need to practice real communication: talking about their life, talking about news, expressing their ideas, discussing issues, discussing some topics related to their material, and also discussing business. In addition, the listeners should
express his/her ideas directly and spontaneously, otherwise, the communication turns into boring and ineffective communication.

Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking starts by teaching the students how to speak in English as a foreign language, then ask them to be able to pronounce the new language accurately. Harmer (2002, p. 269) stated that at this point, a teacher is no longer primarily to correct, but he or she is supposed to encourage students to practice speaking as the target language. Meanwhile, a teacher should be able to encourage students to pronounce some sounds, repeating and imitating him/her. Finally, the students are required to get used to practicing oral language. The goal of teaching speaking should improve students’ communicative skills. It means that students can express themselves and learn how to follow appropriate social and cultural rules in each communicative circumstance. Students are expected to be able to produce the language they learned.

The educator ought to furnish the students with the information on the phonetics highlights and the learning of open methodologies since the objective of language teaching is to furnish students with informative capability, study hall exercises that enhance students' capacity to communicate through discourse would subsequently appear to be a significant segment of a language course and the part of the instructor in planning and administrating such exercises at that point would be more significant (Richard & Renandya, 2005, p. 2). It is fundamental for the teachers to make the students partake in speaking exercises. The teacher should direct and urge them to talk despite the fact that they have an exceptionally predetermined number of words to utilize. Students should be ready to speak when they come to speaking class. Burns and Joyce (1997, p. 134) identified three sets of factors that may be able to see reluctance on the part of students to take part in a classroom involving speaking. They argue that this reluctance may be due to cultural factors, linguistic factors, and psychological/affective factors. In teaching language skills, sometimes a teacher focused on accuracy through teaching a separate part of the skill. However, a teacher also needs to provide opportunities for exploring a language as a tool to get a message across. John (2006), stated that the accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabularies selection is not enough. We also need fluency development since it is important in teaching speaking.
Media
Teaching media is the connector tool used by teachers in order to achieve targets in teaching and learning process. Munadi (2008, p. 6) stated media means a thing for connecting teachers and students to understand the material. Through media teachers easily deliver material that is also easy to understand by students. Sometimes there is little communication between teachers and students. The teacher should work hard to make the communication goes well by choosing the appropriate media. Sudjana and Rivai (1992, p. 2) stated four advantages of teaching media in the learning process. They are: 1) Learning process will be more appealing for students and motivate them to study. 2) Learning material will be more understandable so that students can comprehend it and make them possible to master, especially in achieving the learning objectives. 3) Teaching method will be more varied, there will not be just the teacher’s verbal communication. Hence, the students will not fall into boredom and the teacher will not be exhausted. 4) The students will have more activities since they are not only listening to the teacher’s explanation but also do observation, action, demonstration, and so on.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The research is an experimental study. It is intended to obtain information about the improvement of students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication after using the English Conversation Journal (ECJ) for OS-36 fourth semester students at LP3I College Banda Aceh. The experimental research used in this study is true experimental research. According to Gay, Airasian, and Mills (2006), Design is an important part of determining validity in a study. In essence, experimental design is a complete design that involves another class (control class) besides an experimental class in the study. Using the control class helps the researcher to find out any significant effect of the treatment in the experimental class.

Research Participant
A sample is the subject of research that represents the population taken through certain techniques. The sampling technique that used in this research is purposive sampling. Arikunto (2010) mentioned that purposive sampling is conducted by taking the subject which is not based on the level, randomness, or region but based on a particular
The use of English Conversational Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in business English communication (M. Intan, K. A. Muthalib, & I. A. Samad)

purpose. Based on the recommendation of the English teacher from that college, two classes that have the same level (in terms of cognitive and their responsibilities in learning) were opted to be used in this study. The chosen classes become the sample of this study. The sample is represented by class OS-36 consists of 20 students as an experimental class, and OS-35 that consists of 20 students as a control class. Both of the samples were selected based on the purpose of the study.

Research Instrument

In this study, the test is the most important instrument to collect data. The test is used to determine the students’ competence before the implementation of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) to enhance their ability for specific communication. Two kinds of tests, pre-test and post-test were used in the study. Pre-test is given at the beginning of teaching and the post-test is given at the end of teaching. It is used to measure the improvement achieved by students after the use of English Conversation Journal (ECJ). The test is held after several meetings to evaluate whether the students have mastered the materials and apply them in their speaking performance.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test from the experimental class and control class was analyzed by the researcher using SPSS 17 KK. The data analysis was conducted by organizing the collected data systematically before analyzing the data. It was needed to examine the normality test and the homogenous test first.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

This section will discuss the results of the test in control and Experiment classes.

Table 1. The raw scores of control and experimental classes.

| No | Participants | Score | Participants | Score |
|----|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
|    |              | Pre-test | Post-test   | Pre-test | Post-test |
| 1  | Student 1    | 45      | 75          | Student 1  | 45      | 70        |
| 2  | Student 2    | 75      | 80          | Student 2  | 45      | 80        |
| 3  | Student 3    | 50      | 70          | Student 3  | 65      | 90        |
Table 1 shows the score of the whole test for both the control class and experimental class on speaking performance in Business English Communication. There were 20 students in experimental class and control class. Based on the table above, it can be seen the scores differences achieved by each student between pre-test and post-test in both groups. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher follows suitable statistical procedures such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-test in examining the data.

The statistical summary of pre-test for both the control and experimental groups

The statistical summary of the pre-test is described in the table below. The range, mean, T-score, and Standard Deviation for both control group and control group are presented in the following table (Table 2).

| Student  | Control Group | T-Score | Experimental Group |
|----------|---------------|---------|---------------------|
| N (Number of Students) | 20 | 20 |
| R (Range) | 30 | 30 |
| X (Mean Score) | 55.75 | -5.202 | 56.26 |
| S (Standard Deviation) | 9.77 | 9.85 |
The difference between the Pre-test of the control group and the control group lies in the range, mean score, and standard deviation. For the control group, the range is 30, the mean score is 55.75, and the standard deviation is 9.77, while for the control group, the range is also 30, the mean score is 56.26, and the standard deviation is 9.85.

**Result of normality test on pre-test of the experimental and control groups**

The purpose of normality test is to measure whether the data taken has a normal distribution or not.

**Table 3. Normality test on pre-test of the control and experimental groups.**

| Group      | Kolmogorov-Smirnov\(^a\) Statistic | Df | Sig. | Shapiro-Wilk Statistic | Df | Sig. |
|------------|-------------------------------------|----|------|-------------------------|----|------|
| Control    | 0.227                               | 20 | .124 | 0.874                   | 20 | 0.29 |
| Experiment | .150                                | 20 | .200\* | 0.905                   | 20 | 0.51 |

Based on the output table above, it can be recognized that the Sig score in Pre-test of the control group is 0.029 and the sig score in pre-test of experimental group is 0.051. The sig score obtained from the collected data for both classes is >0.005. According to the basic guidelines of decision making in Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test above, it can be concluded that the results of students’ scores are distributed normally. The results of normality test are shown in the graphic below.

![Normal Q-Q Plot of nilai for kejalan control](image)

**Figure 1.** Normal Q-Q plot pre-test score of control class.
Result of normality test on post-test of both classes

Table 4. Normality test on post-test of control and experimental groups.

| Group     | Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic | Df | Sig. | Shapiro-Wilk Statistic | Df | Sig. |
|-----------|-----------------------------|----|------|------------------------|----|------|
| Control   | .170                        | 20 | .132 | 9.33                   | 20 | .174 |
| Experiment| .165                        | 20 | .154 | 9.36                   | 20 | .204 |

Based on the output table above, it can be recognized that the Sig score in Post-Test of control group is 0.174 and the Sig score in Post-Test of Experimental class is 0.204. According to the collected data, the Sig score for both classes is >0.05. Meanwhile, according to the basic guidelines of decision making in Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test above, it can be concluded that the results of students’ scores are distributed normally.

**Paired sample T-test in control class**

Table 5. Paired samples T-test in control class.

| Pair      | Mean  | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|-------|---|----------------|-----------------|
| Pretest   | 55.750| 20| 9.77039        | 2.18473         |
| 1 posttest| 69.500| 20| 6.66886        | 1.49120         |

The guidelines on decision making on paired sample T-test based on Sig score from SPSS result are: (1) If Sig Score (2-Tailed ) < 0.05 = Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. (2) If the Sig Score (2-Tailed)>0.05= Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected. The table above shows the pre-test and post-test in control class. The average score of pre-test is 55.57
The use of English Conversational Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in business English communication (M. Intan, K. A. Muthalib, & I. A. Samad)

while the post-test score is 69.50. The number of respondents used as samples is 20 students. Because the average score in pre-test is 55.57< post-test 69.50, it means that there is a difference in average score from pre-test and post-test. To prove the significant differences in pre-test and post-test, the researcher interprets the sample of Paired Test results in the table below.

### Table 6. Statistical summary of paired samples T-test.

| Paired Differences | T | Df | Sig. (2-Tailed) |
|--------------------|---|----|----------------|
| Mean Std. Deviation Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Pair 1 Pre-test Post-test | 7.047 | 1.575 | -13.75-13.73 | 19 | .000 |

Based on the output of the table “Paired Sample Test” above, it shows that the Sig (2 Tailed) is 0.000< 0.05 meaning that Ho rejected and Ha accepted. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average score between pre-test and post-test. This means that there is an improvement in the teaching process. The table above also demonstrates the difference in the mean paired score, which is -13.73. This score shows the average deviation of students’ scores in Pre-Test and Post-test, which is 55.75- 69-50 = -1375.

### Paired sample T-test in experiment class

| Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------|
| Pair 1 pretest | 56.2500 | 20 | 9.85086 | 2.20272 |
| posttest | 81.2500 | 20 | 7.58721 | 1.69655 |

The table shows the results of the pre-test and post-test in Experiment class. The average pre-test score is 56.25. Meanwhile, the average post-test score is 81.25. The respondents are 20 students. Based on the data presented above, there are significant differences in the average score between pre-test and post-test. Furthermore, to prove the significant differences in the average scores, the researcher also
interprets the results of the paired sample t-test in the output table “Paired sample t-test”.

### Table 8. Statistical summary of paired samples t-test.

| Test       | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Sig. (2-Tailed) |
|------------|------|----------------|------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Pair 1     | Pretest - Posttest | -25.00 | 7.071      | 1.581                                   | -28.309 - -21.690 | -15.811- -19 | .000 |

Based on the output table “paired sample t-test” above, it shows the Sig (2-Tailed) is 0.000<0.05 = Ho rejected and Ha accepted. Furthermore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average score of pre-test and post-test. It means that the use of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) shows an improvement in students’ Speaking Performance in Business English Communication. The table also identifies information about mean paired differences, which is -25.00. The score shows that the differences in the average score between Pre-test and Post-test are 56.25 - 81.25 = -25.00.

**Normality test of control and experimental class**

Table 9 briefly describes the statistical summary of the normality test in control and experimental classes.

### Table 9. Normality test control and experiment class.

| Groups     | Kolmogorov-Smirnov² | Shapiro-Wilk |
|------------|---------------------|--------------|
|            | Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. |  |
| Control    | .170      | 20 | .132 | .933      | 20 | .174 |  |
| Experiment | .165      | 20 | .154 | .936      | 20 | .204 |  |

The output table above shows that the Sig of the post-test in control group is 0.174 and the Sig score of the post-test in control group is 0.204. The Sig score for both classes is >0.05. According to the basic guidelines of decision making in Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test above, it can be concluded that the results of the students’ scores in control and experimental groups are distributed normally. The results of normality in the pre-test reveal in the figure below.
The use of English Conversational Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in business English communication (M. Intan, K. A. Muthalib, & I. A. Samad)

**Figure 3.** Normal Q-Q plot score of control class.

**Figure 4.** Normal Q-Q plot score of experiment class.

*Test of independent T-test in control and experimental groups*

Before explaining the output result below, we have to understand first the basic guidelines on making decisions in independent sample T-test as follows. (1) If the Sig (2-Tailed) > 0.05 = Ho accepted and Ha Rejected, it means that there are no significant differences in students’ average scores between Control and control groups. (2) If Sig score (2-Tailed) <0.05 = Ho Rejected and Ha Accepted, it means that there is a significant difference in students’ average scores between Control and control groups.
Table 10. Independent T-test in control and experimental groups.

| Groups                | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Group Control         | 20 | 69.500 | 6.66886        | 1.49120         |
| Group Experiment      | 20 | 81.250 | 7.58721        | 1.69655         |

Based on the table, it shows that the data of score in control group are 20 students and in control group are also 20 students. The average score in control group is 69.50, while control group is 81.25. By doing so, it can be concluded that there is a different average score between students in control and control groups. Furthermore, to prove the significant differences between control group and experimental group, we should interpret the output of the Independent sample T-test below.

Table 11. Statistic summary of independent samples T-test.

| Test for Equality of Variances | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Levene's T-test for Equality of Means |                            |
| D                             | F      Sig. | T   | Df | Sig. (2-Tailed) | DM | S.E.D | Lower | Upper |
| R E.V.A                       | .441   | .511 | -5.202 | 38 | .000 | -11.750 | 2.258 | -16.322 | -7.177 |
| E.V.A                         | -5.202 | .000 | 37.4  |    |      | -11.750 | 2.258 | -16.325 | -7.174 |

Based on the table above, it identifies the Sig. Levene’s Test for Equality of Variant is 0.511 >0.05, which means that the variant data between Control and control groups are homogeneous. The table also figure out the Mean difference, which is 11.75.

Discussions

Building up the data analysis in the previous section, this part deals with some discussions on the interpretation of data calculation from pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given for both groups at the first meeting. In this case, the students from both experimental and control groups were asked to answer 9 questions of speaking context concerning their personal information in a job interview scenario. Then, the students’ answers were analyzed in the form of quantitative data through some steps of T-test formula. The first analysis of the
The use of English Conversational Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in business English communication (M. Intan, K. A. Muthalib, & I. A. Samad)

qualitative data aimed to know whether the experimental group and control group were normally distributed or not. Then, it was also tested to know whether the two variants of the group are homogenous or not.

Based on the result calculation, it was found that the normality test on the pre-test from experimental group is 0.051 and it is higher than the significant level of 0.05. The result of the normality test on pre-test of control group is 0.029 which is also higher than the level of significance. So, it means that the score of both the experimental and control group are normally distributed. Furthermore, both the experimental group and control group are homogenous based on the test of homogeneity on the pre-test of both groups.

The results of independent sample T-test on the pre-test of both groups show that the score of Levine’s test for equality of variances is 0.511 which means that it is higher than 0.05. It supports the previous test that revealed the data variant between experimental group and control group is homogenous or equal. Furthermore, based on the result of T-test for equality of means, the score of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.21,6. The value is higher than the level of significance 0.05. It means that there are no significant differences between the score of the pre-test from the experimental group and the result of the pre-test from the control group.

Thus, the speaking performance of each group in Business English Communication is similar. So, using English Conversation Journal (ECJ) as a treatment to improve students’ Speaking Performance in Business English Communication might be conducted to the experimental group. The average result of students’ deviation score in Control and control group is 69.50- 81.25= -11.75. Regarding the output table of “Independent Sample Test” in “equality of variances”, it is known that the Sig. (2-Tailed) is 0.000<0.05. Based on the basic guidelines on making decisions in Independent Sample T-test, it can be concluded that Ho rejected and Ha accepted. In other words, there are significant differences in students’ Speaking Performance in Business English Communication between those who were taught by using English Conversation Journal (ECJ) and those who were not. Therefore, improving student’s speaking performance in Business English Communication by using English Conversation Journal (ECJ) can be an alternative in teaching and learning process.
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and suggestions dealing with the implementation of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) to improve students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication at LP3I College Banda Aceh. The conclusions are drawn from the findings presented in the previous chapters. Meanwhile, some suggestions that might be useful for teachers, heads of education, and future researchers to make further improvements generally in teaching English particularly in teaching speaking are presented in this section.

Conclusions
Based on the findings and discussions presented in the previous chapters, some conclusions are drawn as the answer to the research questions. (1) The teachers, before implementing this experimental research, did some preparations covered designing lesson plans, preparing teaching strategy, selecting materials, preparing criteria for success indicator, and designing instruments for data collection, including questionnaires and test. (2) This experimental research focuses on the use of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) in the Community Language Learning approach, where the teacher stands as a counselor who guides the students in making a composition by providing helpful words and expressions related to the Business English Communication. (3) The statistical summary of the mean score of the post-test of the experimental group and the control group shows that the mean score of the experimental group is higher than the control group score. In contrast, the mean score for the control group on the pre-test is a little bit higher than the mean score in the experimental group. However, after receiving the treatment, teaching by using ECJ, the mean score of the students in the experimental group showed an increase. This could be one consideration to claim that the use of ECJ can improve students’ speaking performance and has good effects on students’ achievement. ECJ also trains students to be familiar with the Business English statement or communication in the formal area that they will face in real-world situations later.

Suggestion
Based on the conclusion of the study, the researcher would like to give some suggestions to improve students’ speaking ability by using
English Conversation Journal (ECJ) in Business English Communication. Some suggestions are recommended for English teachers (especially one who teaches Business English Communication in Business English class), heads of education, and future researchers, to make further improvements generally in teaching English, particularly in teaching speaking. The suggestions recommended by the researcher are written as follow: (1) For English Teachers: looking at the students’ achievement toward the implementation of English Conversation Journal (ECJ), the researcher suggests English teachers or lecturers who teach Business English Communication to use this approach as a media in teaching speaking. It is suggested for teachers to give attention to several aspects such as facilitating students with the media including with the guidance and helpful words in making the composition, arranging students to work in peer and exchanging ideas, assisting students who are stuck while generating ideas in their English Conversation Card. Furthermore, it is also suggested for teachers to use time effectively while giving instructions about the procedures of creating and delivering their compositions while doing conversation. (2) For The Head Education: The implementation of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) in teaching Business English Communication to the students of Office Management department has shown a very good result as expected: student’s motivation in experimental class is higher when the English Conversation Journal (ECJ) is implemented. Therefore, the head of education suggested to encourage and lead teachers to apply this media in teaching speaking especially in Business English Communication class, and also to use resources that can develop the teaching and learning activities. In addition, the head of education should give an opportunity for teachers to improve their performance and capacity by participating in trainings, workshops, comparative studies and many other teacher forums especially with the other LP3I branches in Indonesia. (3) For Other Researchers: Since the data is proven to have a significant influence on the implementation of English Conversation Journal (ECJ) toward the improvement of students’ speaking performance in Business English Communication, it is suggested for other researchers to conduct further research with more various types of media used in teaching speaking in order to get many strengths of this study and to investigate the weaknesses that probably will be found in the future. Finally, it is also suggested for those who are interested in conducting the same research
to study, examine, and deepen language learning through experimental research.

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