

Monolingual or bilingual approaches: The effectiveness of teaching approach in EFL speaking classroom

Sarah Salma Diyani¹, Muhammad Sukirlan², Fajar Riyantika³

Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Soemantri Bojonegoro No. 1 Rajabasa, Bandar Lampung^{1,2,3}

¹Correspondence: sarahslmd@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Speaking is considered an important English skill, yet many English Foreign Learners struggle in communicating their ideas in English. Therefore, this research aimed to compare which approach between monolingual or bilingual gives a better effect to be applied in an English-speaking classroom. This research employed an experimental design, which compared two groups taught using two different approaches. Oral assessment was utilized to collect the data, which were computed using SPSS 27. The data were calculated by using formulas, including, the homogeneity test, paired sample T-test, and independent group samples test. The results showed that the experimental group obtained a pre-test score of 32 and a post-test score of 53, with a paired sample T-test value of -30.309. On the other hand, the control group gained a pre-test score of 31 and a post-test score of 35, and a paired sample T-test value of -6.767. The paired sample T-test results showed that both approaches caused some significant improvements in the students' speaking achievement. On the other hand, the final scores resulted in the Independent Sample Test as 5.033 with a Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.00, which is lower than the critical value (0.05). This indicated that there is a significant difference between students' speaking achievement after being taught through monolingual and bilingual approaches, where the students who received the monolingual approach gained the most improvement. It might be caused by the exposure to the target language that the students received in the class.

Keywords: *monolingual approach, bilingual approach, code-switching, language exposure*

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an interactive process that comprises producing, receiving, and processing information in the presence of both the speaker and listener to convey feelings, thoughts, and opinions (Sharma, 2018). One of the goals of teaching English is to enable students to communicate effectively in the target language during discussions, class presentations, and other situations. However, according to the results of the Cambridge Baseline Study in 2013, pupils' English performance was below the expected level of proficiency and speaking skill was the weakest among the four skills (Nadesan, 2020). Some students struggle with learning to speak yet thrive in grammar and vocabulary. This is a result of their upbringing and lack of exposure to other cultures (Azlan et al., 2019). Besides, students tend to speak their mother tongue at home and at school; they seldom have a chance to speak English as people in their environment communicate with them using their mother tongue (Wong et al., 2021).

The success of students in studying a particular subject, particularly speaking, will be greatly influenced by the teachers' learning strategies. In the process of teaching and learning, particularly, in speaking classes, there are at least two approaches available to English teachers; the monolingual and bilingual approaches. Many teachers believe that a monolingual method should be used while teaching English in speaking class, meaning that teachers should instruct, explain and react to the students in English. Another justification for

the monolingual approach is that it prevents students from fully understanding the content presented in the target language if the teacher combines the students' L1 and the target language while explaining it in English. In other words, code-switching may impede L2 acquisition, preventing the teaching-learning process's intended outcome.

However, many researchers (Atkinson, 1987; Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001) condemn the monolingual approach as an inflexible and improper method of teaching a foreign language. They prefer using the combination of students' L1 and the target language, also known as the bilingual approach, in which the teacher systematically alternates two languages or language varieties within a single conversation or utterance (Lightbown, 2001). In supporting this contrastive opinion, Wilis (1996) suggests that it is not advisable to completely ban students from using their mother tongue.

Considering the importance of teaching approaches on students' success in using English, it is critical to conduct research on this topic about which method of the two is more effective and appropriate to teach English speaking as both have strengths and weaknesses.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is an experimental design which involved two classes with one as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. The aim of this research is to find out students' speaking achievement after the implementation of the monolingual and bilingual approaches and to see which of those approaches have more impact on the speaking achievement of the students. The population of this research was high school students at SMA Negeri 7 Bandar Lampung in the 2022/2023 academic year. The experimental group was taught using the monolingual approach, where using a first language was strictly prohibited among students. Whereas the control group was taught using the bilingual approach where the students were allowed to use their first language. In this research, the researcher carried out pre-tests and post-tests with 3 treatments in between. The result of the scores were then collected and calculated using the Paired Sample T-test and Independent Samples Test using SPSS 27.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

After collecting the data, the researcher calculated the results of the students' scores by using the Paired Sample T-test formula in SPSS 27. This aimed to see the speaking achievement within each group.

Table 1. Paired Sample T-test Result on Experimental Group

		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-test - Post-test	-21.061	3.992	.695	-22.476	-19.645	-30.309	32	.000

As the method of this research has an inter-rater way of scoring, the scoring of the pre-test and post-test between rater 1, rater 2, and rater 3 were summed up. The data were then calculated by using the formula above. Table 1 shows the result of the paired sample t-test of the experimental group. It was found that the t-value of the experimental group is 30.309 with a t-table of 2.141, which is based on the degree of freedom of 32. According to the formula of acceptance, if the significance is <0.05 then there is a significant difference between the initial variable and the final variable. On one hand, the paired sample t-test output table above

shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is lower than the critical value (0.05). Therefore, it was found that there was a significant improvement in students' speaking achievement after the implementation of the monolingual approach.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-test Result on Control Group

		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-test - Post-test	-4.303	3.653	.636	-5.598	-3.008	-6.767	32	.000

Table 2 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is lower than the critical value (0.05). In addition, the t-value result in the table above is 6.767 with a t-table of 2.141. Thus, these indicate that there is also a significant improvement in the speaking achievement that the students gained after the implementation of the bilingual approach.

Based on the paired sample t-test results, both groups seemed to have a significant improvement in speaking achievement. However, this research aimed to compare the effectiveness of these approaches. Therefore, the Independent Samples Test formula was calculated to compare the results of both groups.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test Result

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		F	Sig.			
English Test Result	Equal variances assumed	3.067	.085	5.033	64	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			5.033	57.668	.000

According to the table above, the output of the independent samples test shows that the number of significance (2-tailed) is .000, indicating that it is less than the critical value (0.05). On one hand, it shows that the t-value is 5.033 with a degree of freedom of 64. Based on the formula of acceptance, if the significance is <0.05 then a significant difference is found in the students' speaking achievement between both groups with the monolingual approach aching the score.

Discussion

Based on the explanation above, it was found that there is a statistical improvement in students' speaking skills both in the experimental and control groups although the experimental group gained the most improvement. This is also in line with some previous research that conducted similar research. Omnia (2020), who examines whether the students' opinions and preferences on monolingual and bilingual approaches coincide with their results, shows that the performance charts of the test results prove that the group exposed to the bilingual method has higher A pluses and As and less average grades than the group exposed to the monolingual approach. However, this didn't apply to productive skills, such as speaking. When it comes to skills of speaking, pronunciation, writing or any skill that requires expressing oneself, Omnia (2020) stated that the percentage of bilingualism gets lower.

In this case, the findings of this research also found that activities using the monolingual approach can alter students' mentality toward speaking in English. In this process, students gain more exposure and have more confidence in English speaking as all peers participated in

speaking in English to each other. However, this study also found that bilingualism grasped an idea better and quicker compared to monolingualism. This is because most of the materials were delivered in their first language. But, when it comes to speaking, most bilingualisms were hesitant to speak in English and were too comfortable speaking in their first language.

As this research contemplates the 5 aspects of speaking, the writer found that students taught using the monolingual approach excel more in pronunciation. They tend to listen more to the teacher speaking in English and imitate the way the teacher pronounced words. For instance, most students were inaccurate in pronouncing the word “because”. They often pronounce it as | bē'ɑʊz | instead of | bē'kəz |. However, the accuracy of their pronunciation got better over time as they got used to hearing the teacher speak and were aware of their mistake. On the other hand, based on the statistical data, students taught through the bilingual approach excel more in vocabulary. When teaching in a bilingual approach, the writer often explained some words that the students found unfamiliar in Bahasa Indonesia. Thus, it helped the students to better understand and easily remember the vocabulary.

However, more previous research with clashing standpoints and different results were found. Research by Sabat (2018) titled “Monolingual or Bilingual Approach? The Best Approach to Teaching Speaking for Beginner Level” found that many students struggle in studying using the monolingual approach. They found it difficult to respond if the teacher asked them to say something in a foreign language. Sabat (2018) also added that the students do not understand the materials if it is conveyed in English. Therefore, the teacher had to use code-switching to repeat the instruction. This actually also happened in this research where the students could hardly grasp the idea when it was conveyed in English. However, the writer decided to paraphrase the sentence in a simpler way instead of using code-switching. In the same way, Sabat (2018) also mentioned that the students enjoyed listening while the lecturer was explaining in English but vocabulary hinders them from catching up with what the lecturer meant if all the sentences were expressed in English fully.

In addition, Makiko (2006) who conducted a similar research stated that that students majoring in English prefer to be taught using the monolingual approach as it provides more exposure. Exposure to language is defined as exposure to discourse produced by other speakers (Ellis, et al. 2009). Hence, it can be seen that this statement is in line with the findings of this research, where students enjoyed using the monolingual approach in speaking class as they experienced more exposure to English, especially those who have a keen interest in English.

Therefore, it can be concluded that in teaching English speaking, the monolingual approach is more appropriate if it is integrated with fitting teaching methods. This approach will give more exposure to the students as a modelling instructional strategy. This will also help them to get used to English as it is used mostly in class. This statement is supported by the proof that a significant difference is found between the experimental group and the control group

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After conducting the research for 5 meetings in SMAN 7 with XI IPA 4 and XI IPA 6, the writer concluded that in teaching English speaking, the monolingual approach is more facilitative to be used. Students gained more exposure to the target language when taught using the monolingual approach. It mostly helped the students in improving their pronunciation skills as the students listen and imitate how the teachers say a word. This is supported by the test results the students gained throughout the research.

On the other hand, using the bilingual approach may be beneficial in classes that focus on receptive skills, not productive skills. The writer found that students in the control group gained greater scores in vocabulary aspect. When students found some unfamiliar words throughout the class activity, they often discussed it with the teachers bilingually. Thus, every meaning was explained in the L1. They were able to grasp the idea quicker and gain more understanding of the meaning. Therefore, the bilingual approach may be suitable for learning vocabulary.

Suggestions

Since the monolingual approach is proven to improve students' speaking skills more effectively, English teachers are encouraged to use this approach in order for students to gain more exposure. On the other hand, the bilingual approach can also be beneficial to be used for improving receptive skills if it is integrated effectively with appropriate teaching methods and media. Ideally, teachers and students can discuss the goals of L1 and L2 use and come to an understanding of how to utilize it most effectively. This should, in turn, inspire students, make learning easier for them, and ultimately result in successful English acquisition.

However, this study only focuses on the comparison between the monolingual and bilingual approaches in accordance with the test. To learn more about the effect of these approaches, it is suggested that future researchers analyse more into the perception of the students.

On one hand, this research is conducted with Senior High School students as the sample. It would be suggested that future researchers develop the approaches with a different sample to see the relevance of the result.

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