

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIRECT METHOD STUDENT'S ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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### Abstract

This research examined the effectiveness of the Direct Method in improving English speaking skills among seventh-graders at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan. A quasi-experimental design with two groups (32 students each) was used. The experimental group, taught using the Direct Method, showed significantly improved English speaking abilities compared to the control group, who received traditional instruction. The mean score for the experimental group increased from 60.625 in the pre-test to 84.1 in the post-test, while the control group's mean increased from 57.16 to 71. This improvement was seen in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and confidence. The Direct Method demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing English speaking skills, highlighting its potential for curriculum and teaching method development in schools aiming to improve oral communication skills.

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### Keywords

*Direct Method, English Speaking Skills, Quasi-Eksperimental*

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### Introduction

Language is a system consisting of the development, acquisition, maintenance, or use of complex communication systems, especially the human ability to do so; and language is a specific example of such a system. Language is not only used to communicate but also to build and maintain social relationships. Language is an important symbol of ethnic, social and cultural identity and is determined as a reflection of society and nation. According to Verdoodt (1997). Beyond its symbolic role as a means of communication, language is also considered the most significant factor in maintaining and transmitting ethnic identity across ethnic groups and generations. Language, in addition; Speaking is productive skill in the oral mode. It is like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

One effective method is the Direct Method, which allows students to interact actively in the target language without translation. This method focuses on using language in everyday contexts and direct interactions, so that students can develop their speaking skills better.

This research focuses on the effect of using the Direct Method in teaching English speaking skills to students in class VII SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan. Observations carried out in class VII showed several problems in teaching English speaking skills. Observations were carried out in class VII of SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan through direct classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, as well as analysis of student learning outcomes. Observations show that most students have difficulty speaking English fluently and correctly; they often feel nervous and lack confidence when asked to speak in front of the class. In addition, class VII students have limited opportunities to practice speaking English actively in a classroom environment because the teaching methods used are still teacher-centered and do not involve students directly in interaction. Lack of opportunities to practice speaking actively can cause students to be less familiar with using English in real contexts and less motivated to develop their speaking skills. Class VII students also often fear making mistakes and lack confidence in communicating in English, so they are reluctant to actively participate in speaking activities in class.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Direct Method in improving the English speaking skills of class VII students, identify factors that influence the success of implementing the Direct Method in class VII, and develop solutions to overcome challenges and increase the effectiveness of the Direct Method in improving the speaking skills of class VII students.

This research refers to previous research by Rivers (1968), which stated that students learn language by listening and speaking, associating speech with appropriate actions. Rivers emphasizes the importance of active interaction in the target language for mastery of speaking skills. Richard and Rodgers (1986) also note that in the Direct Method, second language learning should be similar to first language learning, involving a lot of oral interaction and spontaneous use of language. The principles of this method, such as inductive teaching of everyday vocabulary and grammar, support the development of students' speaking skills.

It is hoped that this research can contribute to understanding the influence of the Direct Method on students' English speaking abilities in class VII SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide practical recommendations for

teachers and schools to improve the quality of English language teaching and help students reach their full potential in communicating in English.

## Methods

This study belongs to Quantitative research methods. Sugiyono (2019) Quantitative research is a method based on the philosophy of positivism, used to research certain populations or samples by collecting data using research instruments and statistical data analysis utilizing This research aims to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of direct methods in enhancing students' speaking skills. We will employ a quantitative approach, specifically a quasi-experimental study. This means we will compare two groups of students: one group learning speaking through direct methods (experimental group), and the other group learning through traditional teaching methods (control group). Both groups will learn the same subject matter.

The difference lies in how they learn. The experimental group will be taught using direct methods, while the control group will follow conventional teaching methods. Students' speaking abilities will be assessed through two means: tests and storytelling activities. The results of these assessments will be analyzed to determine if there is a significant difference between the two groups. In other words, we want to see if direct methods have a real impact on improving students' speaking skills.

Following Craswell's argument about the characteristics of quantitative research—which includes identifying trends, descriptions, hypotheses, collecting statistical data, systematic writing, measurable evaluation criteria, objectivity, and minimal researcher bias—this research will investigate the causal relationship between teaching methods (independent variable, X) and students' speaking abilities (dependent variable, Y). Storytelling ability will be a crucial measure for assessing students' speaking skills.

## Discussion

A January 2025 quasi-experimental study at SMP Swasta Katolik Budi Murni 2 Medan evaluated the direct method's effectiveness in improving students' English speaking skills. Sixty-four students (32 per group) received either direct method (experimental) or traditional method (control) instruction over four sessions, with pre- and post-tests assessing speaking ability. Results showed a statistically significant difference ( $t_{\text{calculated}} = 7.36$ ,  $t_{\text{table}} = 2.00$ ) favoring the experimental group (mean 60.625, standard deviation 9.68) over the control group

(mean 57.4, standard deviation 10.2267), indicating the direct method's superior effectiveness in enhancing English speaking skills among the students.

#### 1. Pre-test

Before the treatment, students' basic English proficiency was assessed using a pre-test. The pre-test was administered on 15 January 2025 to the control group and on 16 January 2025 to the experimental group.

Data was collected through an oral test, where students were given three minutes to introduce themselves in English according to pre-determined guidelines. Many students exhibited hesitation and a lack of confidence, evident in their limited vocabulary, grammatical and pronunciation errors, and lack of coherence in their speech. Pre-test scores in both groups were relatively low.

The experimental group achieved a highest score of 72 and a lowest score of 40, while the control group had a highest score of 76 and a lowest score of 40. The average score for the experimental group was 60.625 and for the control group, 57.16.

#### 2. Post-test

The post-tests, conducted on January 23rd (experimental group) and January 24th (control group), 2025, revealed a stark contrast in the improvement of English speaking skills between the two groups. The experimental group, having undergone instruction using the Direct Method, exhibited significantly enhanced performance. Their scores ranged from a low of 68 to a high of 96, yielding an impressive average score of 84.1. This improvement wasn't merely quantitative; qualitative observations revealed a marked increase in various aspects of their speaking abilities. Students demonstrated a noticeable reduction in grammatical errors, significantly improved pronunciation and intonation, a broader vocabulary range, and a considerable boost in both confidence and fluency. Furthermore, they effectively employed non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures, and skillfully connected their ideas using conjunctions and various communication strategies including strategic pauses, fillers, and self-correction. This holistic improvement showcased the effectiveness of the Direct Method in fostering well-rounded communication skills.

In contrast, the control group, which received instruction through the traditional method, showed far less pronounced improvement. While some progress was evident, their fluency and pronunciation remained areas of significant weakness. A noticeable deficiency in vocabulary persisted for several students, directly impacting their confidence and overall fluency. The scores for the control group ranged from 60 to 86, indicating a less substantial improvement compared to the experimental group. Although both groups demonstrated some degree of

improvement, the magnitude of the increase was considerably greater and statistically significant only in the experimental group, highlighting the superior efficacy of the Direct Method in enhancing students' English speaking abilities within the context of this study.

### 3. Enhancing students' oral communication proficiency through the Direct Method.

This research investigates the improvement of students' speaking skills using the Direct Method. Initially, students were apprehensive about making mistakes and being judged by their peers. They were unfamiliar with this method, so the researcher had to explain and demonstrate the learning activities. Students initially lacked fluency and confidence, but after practicing, their confidence and abilities improved, evident in their enthusiasm. The researcher acted as a facilitator and supervisor, creating a comfortable learning environment.

The hypothesis test using a t-test ( $t\text{-calculated} = 7.36$ ;  $t\text{-table} = 2.00$ ) indicates the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, meaning the Direct Method is effective. This result aligns with the theory of Syed Nisar Hussain Hamdani. A pre-test was used to equalize the two groups (experimental and control) before the treatment, and a post-test was administered afterward. The control group used traditional teaching methods, while the experimental group employed the Direct Method

## Conclusion

This study, based on the preceding data analysis, concludes that the Direct Method significantly improved the English speaking skills of seventh-grade students at Medan's Budi Murni 2 Catholic Private Junior High School during the 2025-2026 academic year, supporting the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ). This positive impact manifested in several key areas: increased student engagement and enthusiasm, fostering active participation in class activities; a more enjoyable and engaging learning environment promoting confident communication; encouragement of active oral and written communication; and a more enjoyable learning experience motivating skill development. These findings strongly advocate for the Direct Method as an effective approach to enhance English speaking abilities, with significant implications for curriculum and teaching method development in schools focused on improving oral communication skills.

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