

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE UTILIZATION OF ZOOM IN IMPROVING SPEAKING ABILITY AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dinda Rachmitha Noviyanti

University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA

dindarachmitha742@gmail.com

Abstract: This research investigated students' perceptions on the utilization of Zoom Video Conferencing in improving speaking ability amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. These days, the conventional class was converted into distance learning to prevent the contagious outbreak COVID-19. Therefore, this situation influenced the teachers and students to utilize Zoom as their learning media. The researcher applied quantitative approach, survey method to explore the students' valuable views about utilizing Zoom in improving their speaking ability. These questionnaires were distributed to 102 junior high school and senior high school students in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi areas. After assembling the data, the researcher analyzed the data with the help of IMB SPSS and Ms. Excel 2010. This study revealed a positive insight from the students, such as improving their confidence and comprehension of their speaking skills. Zoom also facilitates students to have direct communication, discussion, and teaching and learning process with its features as face-to-face classroom does.

Keywords: Students' Perception, Zoom, Speaking Ability

INTRODUCTION

As we know, COVID-19 has been alerted as a global pandemic by WHO (World Health Organization) in early 2020. This situation creates some restrictions on humans' activities, and also policy changes in many countries in plenty aspects, especially in education (Suadi, 2020). In the context of education itself, for instance, the International Association of Universities and UNESCO have decided that COVID-19 shut any formal education in the world. The students could not return to their campuses or even schools since the hazardous pandemic launched its attack in many countries (Pham & Tien, 2020). Also, the governments in the entire world including Indonesia are focused to prevent massive contagion by implementing lockdown (Bagata, et.al, 2020). Shortly, the outbreak was completely shut down vast facets of the countries, and no one ever expected this happens and affected a lot of sectors of humans' life including education. Also, Covid-19 forced teachers and students to change their conventional classes into online classes for preventing the outbreak.

Nevertheless, the application of distance learning is not as simple as teachers and students expected due to some inhabited factors that appeared in the practical context such as: 1) lack of facilities supports. Teachers and students are enforced to spend their money on buying the gadgets or internet quota for their online learning activities, 2) inadequate technology skills. Many teachers or students did not have enough technical competence, for instance; how to use the online learning platform or learning management system (LMS), or how to use software for online activities, and 3) indirect oral communications. The students might feel insulated because they thought they only study by themselves and miss the opportunity to have adequate social interaction with the teacher or other friends in class through an online learning platform or LMS.

In this situation, Zoom came as the enlightenment for solving these Distance Learning glitches, especially on how to conduct online learning without losing the interaction like in normal situations supported by simple technology to use by both teachers and students. In its first appearance, Zoom is utilized for inter-company web-based meetings, but recently, Zoom supports the educational purposes to manage, plan, share, and observe the digital learning

process amidst due to the Covid-19 outbreak (Kim, 2020). It clearly shows that Zoom is a potential online learning platform. Zoom is easy to use, and it can create flexible online learning meetings for teachers and students during the pandemic period.

The distance learning activity in Zoom carries out various experiences and perceptions for students such as Zoom catches students' attention and motivation to learn English speaking skills. Students also dare to convey their expressions and notion in English in the learning process. Moreover, students would highly recommend Zoom as the medium of learning English because they gained their vocabulary and fluency towards Zoom (Bawanti & Arifin, 2021). These phenomena emerge in myriad studies in the quantitative and qualitative context about zoom utilization benefits, particularly for students who learn English in the area of speaking. For instance, Shodik (2020) shows Zoom horn students' audacity and speaking skills by conducting a combination of role-playing and think-pair-share. Next, Vurdien (2018) also investigated the efficacy of Zoom Videoconferencing for developing speaking skills by implementing a pre-test post-test experimental group. Later, the researcher discovered that the experimental group developed their speaking ability through Zoom more than the control group. In short, two examples of research above have shown evidence from the eyes of action research and experiment.

Next, the study of Zoom was also done in a qualitative and quantitative context by examining students' perceptions or opinions towards Zoom. For instance, Bawanti and Arifani (2021) scrutinized elementary school students' perception of the application of Zoom in developing speaking skills in Thailand. Zoom is utilized by teachers and students of Ban Loeiwangsai School as the medium of their teaching and learning English process amidst Covid-19. Then, this study uncovered that students greatly praise Zoom as the media of learning English for sharpening the student's confidence, fluency, vocabulary, and speaking ability. Next, Baron (2020) explored UNINDRA English Education post-graduate students' perception of the utilization of online applications for improving their speaking ability amidst the Covid-19 outbreak. The research uncovered that most students chose Google Hangout and Zoom hence students feel Google Hangout and Zoom own the easy features and do not devour the large consumption of internet quota. Last, Risma (2020) proved the usage of Zoom brings a worthwhile outcome in influencing students' motivation and guiding them to their best results. Therefore, many studies have discovered students' perceptions on the utilization of Zoom either in Indonesia or abroad.

The above studies were intended to investigate the influence of Zoom on enhancing speaking skills. With certain parallels and variations, the utilization of Zoom is a hot topic to discuss. Based on that, the researcher feels challenged to conduct research concerning students' perceptions on the utilization of zoom in improving speaking ability amidst Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of junior and senior high school students who learned speaking by zoom, it is still unclear whether Zoom truly can facilitate students' learning. The researcher believes that it needs more investigation to figure out the junior and senior high school students' perceptions. Hopefully, this study can support or gain the evidence around Zoom Videoconferencing research and development, especially in the context speaking ability of junior and senior high school students.

METHOD

This research applied quantitative approach, survey methods by including close-ended and open-ended questionnaires. This method is considered appropriate for this study because it gathers and examines a wide range of data from large numbers of participants, allowing the researcher to conclude students' perceptions of Zoom's usage in developing speaking abilities.

The survey is adopted and modified from Bawanti’s study (2021). It consists of 11 items in the form of a 5-Likert Scale and two items of an open-ended questionnaire to gain a further explanation of students' perception of the utilization of Zoom. This questionnaire was distributed through WhatsApp and Twitter to 102 junior and senior high school students in the Jabodetabek area. The data was statistically analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha Statistic and descriptive statistics to present the mean and standard deviation, thus it allows a suitable computation to be produced using the data gathered from students’ responses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Closed-Ended Questionnaire

To gain the students' perception of the utilization of Zoom Video Conferencing, 11 statements were queried to 102 participants in the Jabodetabek area in the close-ended questionnaire. For tabulating the collected data from participants, the researcher applied the consistency test of Cronbach’s Alpha to examine the closed-ended questionnaire. The result had presented below:

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.926	11

As concluded from Table 4.1 above, the researcher got 0.926 as the result of the consistency of Cronbach's Alpha Score in the close-ended questionnaire. Vaske, et.al (2017) asserted that it means that the internal consistency is high adequate if the score is above 0.8. Therefore, 0.926 is considered a high score. Later, the tabulation of closed-ended questionnaires which is consisted of five multiple-choice responses to determine the precise answer based on the respondent’s viewpoints; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The following answers were engraved on the tabulation below:

Table 2: Participants' Answers to Closed-Ended Questionnaire

No	Statements	X	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	I enjoy studying online by myself since it gives me confidence.	3,27	6 (5,8%)	38 (37,2%)	41 (40,1%)	12 (11,7%)	5 (4,9%)
2.	Zoom has improved my studying time management.	3,29	12 (11,7%)	33 (32,3%)	34 (33,3%)	18 (17,6%)	4 (3,9%)
3.	My enthusiasm to study grew as a result of online learning using Zoom.	3,28	14 (13,7%)	31 (30,3%)	30 (29,4%)	24 (23,5%)	3 (2,9%)
4.	I enjoyed using Zoom on the class.	3,57	17 (16,6%)	43 (42,1%)	25 (24,5%)	14 (13,7%)	3 (2,9%)
5.	Zoom videoconferencing contributes to making	3,07	8 (7,8%)	34 (33,3%)	29 (28,4%)	20 (19,6%)	11 (10,7%)

	my learning speaking faster						
6.	When I learn online speaking using Zoom, I memorize some vocabulary and grammar better.	3,45	24 (23,5%)	24 (23,5%)	31 (30,3%)	20 (19,6%)	3 (2,9%)
7.	Answering the teacher's question about speaking is not tough for me.	3,48	16 (15,6%)	36 (35,2%)	33 (32,3%)	15 (14,7%)	2 (1,9%)
8.	I can understand the courses easily when I learn online by speaking with Zoom videoconferencing	3,27	20 (19,6%)	22 (21,5%)	34 (33,3%)	18 (17,8%)	8 (7,8%)
9.	Online learning using Zoom videoconferencing increase my learning, especially in speaking	3,09	13 (12,7%)	27 (26,4%)	30 (29,4%)	21 (20,5%)	11 (10,7%)
10.	I recall the speaking lesson better when I study online using Zoom.	3,18	17 (16,6%)	23 (22,5%)	33 (32,3%)	20 (19,6%)	9 (8,8%)
11.	Online learning using Zoom is improving my speaking skill	3,30	19 (18,6%)	27 (26,4%)	32 (31,3%)	14 (13,7%)	10 (9,8%)

Based on the 11 statements above, the researcher can identify and classify two major perceptions of the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability which showed increasingly positive in terms of ascending student's attitude and speaking competence. Hereby the classification of the perception results of the data is presented in the table below:

Table 3: The Recapitulation of Student's Perception

Classification	Number	Percentage (%)		
		SA + A	N	D + SD
The utilization of Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability can rise students' attitude	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	48,23%	32,54%	19,80%
The utilization of Zoom videoconferencing has an impact on students' speaking ability	5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11	42,15%	31,37%	26,96%
Total	11 Items			

Based on the recapitulation above, it can be concluded that the majority of responds had shown students' perception was strongly agreed and agreed in the context of the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability can improve their **attitude** (48,23%) and **speaking competence** (42,15%). Secondly, the next result was a Neutral response which is followed by these numbers; 32,54% and 31,37%, and the last one shows the numeric of disagree and strongly disagree (19,80% and 26,96%).

2. Open-Ended Questionnaire

This open-ended questionnaire contained 2 questions about the participants' perceptions of the utilization of Zoom in improving speaking ability. Here were the following questions along with the number of participants:

Table 4. Open-ended Questionnaire Questions

No.	Questions	Participant
1.	As a student, what's your perception about using Zoom videoconferencing in improving your speaking ability?	102
2.	What are the advantages that you feel about using Zoom videoconferencing in improving your speaking ability?	102

Question 1.

The responses from the participants for the first the open-ended question in the questionnaire show that they perceive the utilization of zoom in learning speaking skills positively. It can be seen from the following extracts of the students' responses:

"I prefer to learn online with the help of Zoom hence I feel I am more confident in asking questions about something that I missed to my teacher regarding the lesson and sharpen my speaking ability in the class. There is another reason why I feel more confident because I learn the lesson through the screen, not through the face-to-face classroom." (Participant no.2)

"In my opinion, Zoom is useful in the middle of an outbreak hence Zoom keeps the teaching and learning process to be conducted. In speaking courses, I feel I sharpen my speaking ability hence the voice of the teacher is vivid to listen and the visualization of the material from a book or PowerPoint which my teacher shows on the screen is clearly to be seen. Seeing the advantages that I sensed above, I understand how to speak English based on the context such as I know that the expression "Do you agree with...?" is for asking the opinion of the interlocutor." (Participant no. 32)

"Well, based on my view, Zoom is acceptable and supports the class keeps conducted in the middle of a plague. Zoom has not significantly dissimilar from offline class hence the features are proposed like we conduct the learning process in face-to-face class such as utilize the whiteboard feature to mark the important point of the material or exact expression in the related dialogue and breakout room which allow us to have a proper discussion and practice our dialogue. There is also a chat feature that is utilized to ask some questions by the students. We feel more comfortable and enthusiastic to have a speaking class with Zoom because of the features that we have mentioned before." (Participant no. 40)

Question 2.

As for the second open-ended question in the questionnaire, the students' responses show various advantages of using Zoom in their learning.

"When the speaking lesson is conducted, I utilize raise hand feature for asking my teacher about some points or material that I missed. I do not need to ask it louder as I do in the offline class." (Participant no. 3)

"In my view, Zoom is such a brilliant and useful webcam application hence Zoom creates a tranquil teaching and learning process. It means that the students must turn off their microphones when my teacher explains the speaking material, thus I can focus on the lesson. The output that I feel after using Zoom for a long time, my speaking ability improve a lot. I can speak English fluently and develop my vocabulary building, thus my speaking score is higher." (Participant no. 10)

"Zoom only help me to learn with its flexibility in time and space amidst the outbreak. One time, I attended the speaking class even I was sick and quarantined in the hospital." (Participant no. 31)

According to the open-ended questionnaire that has been presented above, most students responded positively. From question number 1, they explained that their confidence gains significantly when asking the question or practicing their speaking skill in the class (no.2), sharpening their understanding and skills (no. 32), and creating conducive online learning by utilizing the features (no.40). Next, the answer from question number 2 exposed that they feel the great advantages after utilizing Zoom in their speaking class such as the raise hand feature helps them to ask the lesson the teacher (no.3), can turn off the microphone every time the class is conducted (no.10), and flexible in time and place (no.31).

As we discovered in the previous section, this study has impressively revealed the result of students' perception of the utilization of Zoom in improving speaking ability amidst COVID-19 was positive in attitude and speaking ability. Firstly, the findings vividly uncovered that 48,23% of students have a nice perception that utilizing Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability can rise students' attitudes. The researcher assumed the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing was common among junior high school and high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the students feeling more confident and active when asking the teacher about the material, discussing in group or pair, or speaking English with others in the class. Students have their chance to own their meaningful interaction in Zoom class in the form of audio and visual. Also, the students feel their motivation gained significantly in learning and sharpening their speaking ability such as they feel high spirited when the class is conducted. Student also can manage their time well hence they come to class at the exact time.

This finding is in line with Shodik (2020) and Risma (2021) that Zoom brings a worthwhile effect on developing students' activeness and motivations in improving speaking ability hence the students have their eloquent contact towards Zoom. Bawanti and Arifani (2021) that Zoom is an efficient virtual classroom to rise students' confidence, fluency, and vocabulary to speak English in the class. Also, Zoom creates effective communication between teachers and students or students and students. Furthermore, Shodik (2020) discovered students have great motivation and strenuous audacity to learn to speak in the class immediately. Shortly, this first finding has proven that Zoom gives myriad advantages to activate students' positive attitudes in improving speaking ability, such as they are more active and confident to express their notions towards speaking in English in the class.

Lastly, it was discovered that 42,15% of students own decent perceptions that utilizing Zoom in improving speaking ability can sharpen the speaking ability. The researcher assumed that students feel their speaking ability sharpened significantly with the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing hence it was an efficient virtual-based classroom to learn. This study owns the same line as Bawanti and Arifani's study (2021). They discovered that Zoom has a positive impact to improve students' speaking skills, such as the student can remember the courses easily and gain a lot of vocabulary. Shodik (2021) also revealed that Zoom develops students' speaking ability impressively hence their understanding skill level and vocabulary has been sharpened well. In conclusion, it uncovered that students' perceptions were impressive in the context of speaking competence of the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing. Besides Zoom improving speaking competence, it also developed students' vocabulary building and grammar.

Additionally, the result of the open-ended questionnaire was that 50% of students agreed to own their good perception about sharpening their speaking skills toward Zoom videoconferencing. Another result is that 78,43% of students agreed that they feel the great advantages after they utilized Zoom videoconferencing in improving their speaking ability. Therefore, the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability was significant to junior high school and high school students in Jabodetabek.

CONCLUSION

This study has discovered students' perception of the utilization of Zoom videoconferencing in improving speaking ability amidst COVID-19. The attitude and speaking ability of junior high school and high school students are indications of the utilization of Zoom. There are advantages that students sense regarding this issue such as Zoom has an impressive impact to sharpen students' activeness and confidence. Students also felt comfortable learning with Zoom which has several features such as a whiteboard, share screen, chat column, and raise hand which is created as same as the face-to-face classroom. Lastly, another benefit is Zoom is flexible, thus students can learn anytime and anywhere.

For future research, it is a great reference to future researchers who will investigate related to this researcher, to make deeper this research in the form of experiments or qualitative research. Future researchers are also expected to investigate specifically the respondents; merely upper secondary or lower secondary students in terms of Zoom videoconferencing to improve another English major skill, for instance, listening, reading, and writing.

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