
The Role Of Digital Media In Improving Students' English Speaking Skills At STAI Ma'arif Sampang

Khoirul Anam¹

The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang
correspondence e-mail*, aroel.nerrazzurri@gmail.com

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Abstract

Improving English speaking skills is one of the important aspects in language education, especially for students at The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang who are preparing to communicate in a global context. In this digital era, digital media offers a new approach that allows students to learn flexibly, listen to native languages, and practice independently. This study was conducted to understand the extent to what digital media have a role in improving students' English speaking skills at The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang, the types of media most often used, and the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect its effectiveness. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore students' experiences and perceptions of the use of digital media in learning to speak. Data were obtained through in depth interview and observation to students who frequently use language learning apps and online communication platforms. The purposive sampling technique was chosen to ensure participants had relevant first-hand experience, while thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes from the data collected. The results show that digital media plays a significant role in supporting students' English speaking skills. Platforms such as YouTube, Zoom and language learning apps provide authentic materials and flexible in speaking spaces practice, which help students to improve vocabulary, pronunciation and their confidence. However, the research also found that there are inhibiting factors, such as limited internet access and lack of direct guidance from instructors, which can affect students' consistency in utilizing digital media.

Keywords

Digital Media, English Speaking Skills.



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INTRODUCTION

The digital era is an era where everyone can communicate with each other more closely even though they are geographically far away.¹ In the era of globalization and industrial revolution 4.0 as it is today, advances in digital technology have brought significant changes in

¹ Klaus Bruhn Jensen, *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network, Mass, and Interpersonal Communication* (Routledge, 2022).

various aspects of life, including in the world of education.² We cannot deny that digital learning media is an integral part of modern education. Technology has changed the way we learn and access information, and digital learning media is an effective solution to meet the demands of the times. With the increasing development of digital technology, especially in education, not only for teachers or lecturers can access learning materials and media, but also students can access learning materials from anywhere and anytime and can create flexibility in learning, eliminating time and space barriers in the education process.

English language skills, especially in the aspect of speaking, have become one of the essential skills for students in facing the globalization era.³ In Indonesia, universities play an important role in developing students' English language skills, especially through various learning approaches. At The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang, the application of digital media such as language learning apps, podcasts, and social media is increasingly used to support English language teaching. Digital media offers flexibility of access and variety of content, making it an effective tool in the teaching-learning process.⁴

At the moment, the role of technology is very important and can be applied to various aspects of human life. The development of technology in the 21st century is increasingly rapid, followed by the development of Human Resources (HR) which continues to increase.⁵ The use of digital media allows students to access English language resources and practice speaking through various applications and online platforms. In addition, digital media helps overcome the limitations of conventional learning methods, especially in areas that do not always have access to foreign language tutors. However, the effectiveness of using digital media in improving students' speaking skills needs to be evaluated in depth.

Learning media is an intermediary medium for what is conveyed to be accepted and understood by students.⁶ Learning media is anything that can be used to channel the sender's message to the recipient, so that it can stimulate the thoughts, feelings, attention and interest of

² Valentyna Voronkova et al., "Transformation of Digital Education in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Globalization," 2023.

³ Mohammed Adulkareem A Alkamel and Santosh S Chouthaiwale, "The Use of ICT Tools in English Language Teaching and Learning: A Literature Review," *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature-JOELL* 5, no. 2 (2018): 29–33.

⁴ Elvis Wagner, Aaron Olaf Batty, and Evelina Galaczi, *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Listening* (Routledge, 2024).

⁵ Mochamad Kamil Budiarto, Abdul Rahman, and Agus Efendi, "Proposing Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-Based Learning Transformation to Create Competitive Human Resources: A Theoretical Review," *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 7, no. 4 (2024): 2024076.

⁶ Leli Hasanah Lubis et al., "The Use of Learning Media and Its Effect on Improving the Quality of Student Learning Outcomes," *International Journal Of Education, Social Studies, And Management (IJESSM)* 3, no. 2 (2023): 7–14.

students to learn. Learning media is one of the factors that encourage students in achieving maximum learning goals. Lange & Costley (2020) also argue that learning media are assembled to clarify the message and also the meaning of the learning provided.⁷ Learning media is one of the teaching aids for teachers to convey teaching material, increase student creativity and increase student attention in the learning process. So, it can be concluded that, learning media is a teacher's tool in delivering education that can interpret concepts and discussions more meaningfully and easily understood and can attract students' attention when learning with the aim of achieving maximum learning objectives.

The development of digital media such as computers, tablets, smartphones, and widespread internet access has created new opportunities in the learning process.⁸ Through media such as language learning apps, podcasts, and interactive video platforms, students feel more motivated to practice speaking English independently and intensively. One of the areas that has been greatly impacted by this development is learning in English. Therefore, the use of technology in English language learning offers a huge opportunity maximize speaking skills for students.

The development of information and communication technology is growing rapidly at this time which has a significant impact on all aspects of life.⁹ The influence of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in literacy-based instruction is on mindset, communication and social interaction. On the other hand, the impact of ICT in implementing literacy based instruction can change the learning patterns students who are exposed to the internet extensively. It becomes easier for students to access the latest information and knowledge online with one touch of the screen using mobile devices. Literacy practices are heavily influenced by technological and economic influences, social conditions, and the media, especially in literacy activities that have undergone a shift from printed texts to screen texts.

Actually, the development of information and communication technology not only has a positive (constructive) effect, but also has a destructive (destructive) negative effect. The negative effect is caused by the development of faith and piety (IMTAQ) not in line with the development of science and technology (IPTEK). Mastery of science and technology is even used to explore honest procedures so that cyber crime (credit card piracy) was born.

⁷ Christopher Lange and Jamie Costley, "Improving Online Video Lectures: Learning Challenges Created by Media," *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 17, no. 1 (2020): 16.

⁸ Mamdouh Alenezi, Saja Wardat, and Mohammed Akour, "The Need of Integrating Digital Education in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities," *Sustainability* 15, no. 6 (2023): 4782.

⁹ Yuriy Bilan et al., "Impact of Information and Communications Technology on the Development and Use of Knowledge," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 191 (2023): 122519.

The new vision of learning promotes learners to learn not only skills and knowledge that are needed but also to identify the source to learn these skills and knowledge.¹⁰ Using of digital media in English language learning has become a widely discussed topic, given that English is an important international language in global communication, business, and academia. Of course, the use of technology in language learning is not free from challenges, obstacles such as limited internet access, limited devices, or lack of technology skills to the students themselves can be a barrier. Through the proper utilization of technology, today's digital media can create dynamic and relevant learning in English speaking skills for students.

The progress of a nation can be measured by education. Therefore, the world of education must continue to make updates that are appropriate to the times and adapted to the development of the world so as not to lag behind. Because with education, it will produce a young generation that is alert, competent, superior, responsible, democratic, peace of loving, and ready to take part in the development of the nation and the state. Before the digital era, we know that education in Indonesia was dominated by traditional teaching methods. Teachers are the main source of information, while students are mostly passive recipients. Limited learning resources, such as text books that are often out dated, as well as lack of access to the latest information, are the main challenges in the traditional education system. However, with the development of technology, this paradigm is starting to change. The future of education looks bright with digital technology. By continuously innovating and overcoming challenges, education can achieve a more inclusive, effective and adaptive system. This transformation from traditional methods to digital methods is not only a necessity, but also an opportunity to advance education in Indonesia to a higher level.

Media effectiveness is a measure of how far the goal is achieved by using media to channel messages from sender to receiver. Media is said to be effective if students achieve learning outcomes that are in accordance with the objectives that have been set. One of the important points and effectiveness of using digital learning media is its ability to create a more interactive learning experience. Many digital learning platforms provide various interactive features such as learning videos, educational games, simulations, e-books, podcasts, webinars, and even the latest technology such as youtube, classrrom. These features not only make the learning process more interesting, but also increase student engagement in the learning material. For example, through simulations and educational games, students can apply theoretical knowledge in realworld

¹⁰ Berit S Haug and Sonja M Mork, "Taking 21st Century Skills from Vision to Classroom: What Teachers Highlight as Supportive Professional Development in the Light of New Demands from Educational Reforms," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 100 (2021): 103286.

situations, deepening their understanding in a more practical way. By utilizing this technology, teachers can create learning that is more dynamic and relevant to the times. The use of video learning and webinars allows teachers to provide more in depth and detailed explanations, while educational games can be integrated to make the learning process more collaborative and competitive.

Digital media covers a wide range of tools and platforms that can be used to support learning, such as mobile apps, e-learning platforms, video tutorials and other online resources. such as mobile applications, e-learning platforms, video tutorials, and other online resources. The use of digital media in English language learning offers various advantages. First, digital media allows easy and quick access to diverse learning resources. Students can access learning materials anytime and anywhere, so they can learn according to their schedules and individual needs. For example, apps such as Duolingo and Babbel provide language exercises that can be accessed flexibly, allowing students to study in their leisure time.

By using digital learning media, students can acquire technological skills such as the use of specialized software, data analysis and understanding of the latest technology trends. The use of digital platforms in the learning process provides not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills that can be applied in various work contexts. However, while these benefits seem encouraging, we need to realize that there are still some challenges that need to be overcome in the implementation of digital learning media.

Several factors support the successful implementation of digital media in English language learning, as identified in previous studies. One of the most crucial factors is the availability of technological infrastructure. Adequate access to digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, or computers, along with stable internet connectivity, is fundamental for effective digital learning. In regions where technological infrastructure is limited, the use of digital media tends to be less optimal compared to more developed areas. Without sufficient access, students may experience difficulties in participating fully in digital-based learning activities, particularly those that require synchronous interaction or multimedia content. Another important supporting factor is the quality and design of digital learning content. Interactive, engaging, and curriculum-aligned materials significantly enhance the effectiveness of learning. Well-designed digital content not only facilitates better understanding but also increases students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. Lin and Chen (2016) found that thoughtfully structured digital materials can

positively influence students' learning enthusiasm and active participation, especially in language learning contexts where repeated practice and exposure are essential.¹¹

Student engagement and motivation also play a central role in determining the success of digital media use. Students who demonstrate higher motivation tend to utilize digital tools more effectively and consistently. The integration of gamification elements, such as points, badges, and interactive challenges, has been proven to increase students' interest and involvement in learning activities. Zainuddin and Perera (2019) emphasize that gamified digital learning environments can foster positive learning attitudes and sustained engagement, particularly among university students. In addition, teacher support and training are essential components in maximizing the potential of digital media. Lecturers who possess adequate digital literacy and pedagogical skills are better equipped to integrate technology into the learning process effectively. Continuous professional development and institutional support enable educators to design meaningful digital activities, guide students appropriately, and ensure that technology serves pedagogical objectives rather than merely functioning as a supplementary tool.

Despite its many advantages, the use of digital media in English language learning also presents several challenges and limitations. One of the most significant obstacles is unequal access to technology and internet connectivity. Not all students have the same opportunities to use digital devices or reliable internet services, which can create disparities in learning experiences and outcomes.¹² This digital divide remains a major issue, particularly in institutions located in less-developed regions. Another inhibiting factor is the lack of technological skills among some students. Although many students are familiar with digital tools for entertainment and social interaction, they may lack the technical competence required to use educational platforms effectively. Limited digital literacy can hinder their ability to maximize the benefits of digital learning resources, especially when learning involves more complex applications or online collaboration tools.

Digital distractions also pose a serious challenge to effective learning. The presence of social media, games, and other non-academic digital content often interferes with students' concentration and focus during learning activities. This can reduce the quality of engagement and negatively

¹¹ Kuan-Fu Chen, Gwo-Jen Hwang, and Mei-Rong Alice Chen, "Knowledge Check-Based Concept Mapping in Digital Games: Impacts on Students' Learning Performance and Behaviors," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 72, no. 4 (2024): 2297–2324.

¹² Vikki S Katz, Amy B Jordan, and Katherine Ognyanova, "Digital Inequality, Faculty Communication, and Remote Learning Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Survey of US Undergraduates," *Plos One* 16, no. 2 (2021): e0246641.

affect learning outcomes, particularly in speaking practice that requires sustained attention and active participation.

Furthermore, the abundance of information available online presents challenges in evaluating the reliability and credibility of sources. Students must develop critical digital literacy skills to distinguish valid academic materials from unreliable or misleading information. Without proper guidance, students may rely on inaccurate resources, which can negatively impact their language development. Finally, the use of digital platforms can increase performance pressure on students. Online learning environments often require students to demonstrate their abilities publicly, submit recordings, or participate in live discussions, which can create anxiety and stress. This pressure may affect students' confidence, particularly in speaking activities, and ultimately influence their learning performance.

This study aimed to analyze the role of digital media in improving students' English speaking of 1st semester and 3rd semester whose study in Islamic Education Management (MPI) and Arabic Language Education (PBA) programs at The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang and identify supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the results of English language learning to improve student speaking through digital media. The conclusion of this study states that digital media is very effective in improving students' English speaking skills, but this effectiveness can be optimized with support from the institution, especially in providing facilities and training for lecturers to provide appropriate guidance. The study recommends increased access and supervision in the use of digital media to create a more interactive and immersive learning experience for students.

METODE

This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of digital media in improving students' English speaking skills at the State Islamic College (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang.¹³ A descriptive qualitative method was used to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and views regarding the use of digital media in English learning, allowing the researcher to capture not only observable behaviors but also the meanings behind students' learning practices. The research was designed as a case study, as this approach is particularly suitable for examining a phenomenon within its real-life context and for generating a comprehensive understanding of how digital media is implemented in a specific institutional

¹³ Patrik Aspers and Ugo Corte, "What Is Qualitative in Research," *Qualitative Sociology* 44, no. 4 (2021): 599–608; David Silverman, "Qualitative Research," 2020.

setting.

The participants of this study were first- and third-semester students at STAI Ma'arif Sampang who actively used digital media to improve their English speaking skills. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they possessed relevant experiences related to the research focus. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on participants' availability, and probing techniques were employed to obtain deeper and more detailed responses. Observations were carried out during learning activities to examine how students interacted with digital media such as conversation-based applications and video communication platforms.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and meanings related to the role and challenges of digital media in English speaking instruction. The analysis process involved data coding, theme categorization, and interpretation to draw meaningful conclusions. To enhance the validity and credibility of the findings, source triangulation was applied by comparing data from interviews, observations, and supporting documents, such as students' learning records. This triangulation ensured a comprehensive and reliable understanding of the research phenomena.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

This study identifies the role of digital media in supporting students' English speaking skills, the types of digital media most often used, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the effectiveness of digital media compared to conventional methods. The findings are analyzed based on in-depth interviews and observations of 1st semester and 3rd semester students at STAI Ma'arif Sampang who regularly use digital media in English learning. In this study, the researcher interviewed five students of Arabic Language Education (PBA) and five students of Islamic Education Management (MPI) with structured and objective questions to explore their level of English comprehension and the using of digital media in improving their English speaking.

The Role of Digital Media in Improving Students' English Speaking Skills

To find out the results of how the role of digital media in improving students' English speaking skills, the researchers conducted interviews with students by asking the following questions:

What do you know about digital media in English language learning?

Of the five students of PBA Program and MPI Program in the 1st and the 3rd semester at State Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang agreed that digital media in English learning is a platform of various media sourced from electronic devices as a medium of English learning. In this learning, they often use online applications such as Podcasts, Youtube and other websites where students can upload and watch videos directly, especially those related to English lessons on speaking. Their views reflect a uniform understanding of the role and function of the using of digital media sourced from the internet is very useful.

What is the role of digital media in improving students' speaking skills in English?

The results show that digital media plays a significant role in supporting students' English speaking skills. As a result of interviews conducted with several students at STAI Ma'arif Sampang said that the role of digital media in English learning methods to improve speaking by using applications such as Youtube can help to get authentic material, thus students can enrich vocabulary and practice pronunciation in English vocabulary, not only that, through videos from Youtube they can imitate directly how to recite and how to pronounce well. With digital media, students are also able to learn according to their own pace and their needs, because one of the developments of language is speaking, that's means speaking about English study.

How does the students' speaking ability in English improve after using digital media?

Of the three students stated that their abilities in reading and writing were not good, but in speaking skills they felt there was an improvement after using links on YouTube. Meanwhile, two other students also admitted that they felt there was an improvement in English speaking even though their writing and listening were weak. From the results of interviews conducted with the five students above, it shows that the level of speaking ability in English can develop and improve through digital media sourced from the internet or YouTube. But sometimes some of these students also have difficulty in capturing speaking material from YouTube is considered too fast. So that an English lecturer must also be able to make improvements so that the using of media which sourced from YouTube is getting better then.

The effectiveness of using digital media in improving English speaking skills compared to conventional learning methods.

On this occasion, researchers conducted interviews with 5 MPI Study Program students to get a direct response about the use of digital media with the following questions:

What is the effectiveness of digital media compared to conventional in English language

learning?

Using digital media such as Youtube as a means to improve understanding of English is very effective and efficient compared to conventional learning where examples of English conversations cannot be seen directly. Students can also discuss and follow up directly with lecturers and friends what the meaning of the delivery and examples on Youtube is. From the results, it is known that five students feel more comfortable and confident when learning to speak through digital media compared to conventional methods. Digital media is considered more effective because it provides opportunities for students to listen, imitate, and practice with authentic English materials, which is difficult to find in conventional learning.

What digital media in English language learning to improve speaking are often used?

This study found that English language learning applications from video platforms such as YouTube and Zoom are the most frequently used digital media by students. YouTube is considered useful because it offers a variety of authentic English conversational video content, thus helping students improve their speaking skills by imitating and practicing the dialogues in the videos. In addition, observational interviews conducted with five students found that Zoom and Google Meet or class room, which are widely used in online discussion activities, can expand students' speaking skills, especially in situations that resemble native conversations with foreign speakers.

How do you respond to learning English using digital media?

From the interview results this time, students responded positively that digital media in English learning really helped them overcome their awkwardness when practicing speaking independently before having a live conversation. Some students stated that they still need guidance from lecturers to correct mistakes in pronunciation and intonation that can only be obtained through YouTube.

Supporting and inhibiting factors for using digital media

In this study, the researchers also identified several supporting and inhibiting factors in the use of digital media to learn students' English speaking. On this occasion, researchers conducted observations and interviews with five students of PBA Program in 3rd semester at STAI Ma'arif Sampang, with the following questions:

What are the factors supporting the use of digital media in English language learning to improve students' speaking?

The three 3rd semester students of PBA Study Program explained that there are several

factors that support the use of digital media in learning English, one of the supporters includes high accessibility, variety of content, and freedom of learning in the sense that they can directly access what they want according to the learning topics provided by digital media. Meanwhile, two other PBA study program students explained that one of the supporting factors for the use of digital media connected to the internet in learning English is the availability of technological infrastructure, namely adequate access to digital devices with a stable internet connection such as free Wi-Fi, so that it has a better and faster impact on the use of digital media.

What are the inhibiting factors of using digital media in English learning to improve students' speaking?

The interview results from the five students faced different challenges in using digital learning media depending on their ability to access online media usage. Some of them found it difficult to find quality content and appropriate English speaking materials, and they overcame this by seeking recommendations from peers.

Another problem was found to be the internet connection faced by students who chose to download videos to watch offline. In addition, ad interruption is also a problem when using media sourced from YouTube, and they use the ad skip feature. These factors can affect students' consistency in utilizing digital media to practice English speaking. Then, each student has a different strategy to overcome the problems they face when using YouTube as a source of learning speaking material

KESIMPULAN

This study reveals that digital media plays an important role in improving English speaking skills to students of 1st semester and 3rd semester whose study in Islamic Education Management (MPI) and Arabic Language Education (PBA) programs at The State of Islamic Collage (STAI Ma'arif) Sampang. Through media such as learning applications, interactive videos, and online communication platforms, students have wider and more flexible access to practicing speaking. Digital media not only provides authentic materials that help students in understanding the practical use of English, but also encourages them to learn independently by following their own rhythm.

The most frequently used media types, such as YouTube, Zoom, and Google Meet, are proven to be effective in helping students practice their speaking skills. The use of this media also provides a variety of learning methods that are more dynamic and interesting than conventional

learning, so that students feel more motivated and confident in using English. With these types of digital media used in English language learning, it provides a more comfortable and relaxed learning effectiveness. Learning is very effective and efficient because it can be directly accessed compared to conventional learning where examples of English conversations cannot be seen directly. Although digital media offers many benefits, some inhibiting factors were identified, such as limited internet connection and lack of direct guidance from instructors in speaking practice. These factors highlight the need for institutional support in providing adequate internet facilities and guidance from lecturers to maximize the benefits of digital media.

Overall, digital media proved effective in improving the English speaking skills of STAI Ma'arif Sampang students. This study recommends that educational institutions pay more attention to the provision of digital infrastructure and involve lecturers in supervising the use of digital media, so that students can optimally utilize technology for the development of their English speaking skills. To optimize digital transformation in education, collaboration between the government, private sector and society is required. The government has taken steps by providing infrastructure and training programs for teachers. However, these efforts need to be supported by active participation from all relevant parties. Therefore, to ensure that all students can benefit from digital learning media, investment in infrastructure and resources is key to success. Schools, colleges and governments need to commit to providing the necessary facilities and support so that every student can access quality education and acquire the necessary skills to face the future. With these steps, we can ensure that education through digital learning media is not just a trend, but also a strong foundation for the nation's progress.

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