

The Effect of Differentiated Learning on Students' English-Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of differentiated learning on the English Speaking skills aspects of eleventh-grade students at SMAN Darussholah Singonjuruh during the 2024/2025 academic year. Using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design, 34 students participated as respondents. Data were collected using speaking tests focusing on fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The results showed a significant increase in students' speaking scores, with the average rising from 62.21 in the pre-test to 82.94 in the post-test. The Wilcoxon test yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that differentiated learning had a significant positive effect on students' speaking skills. The findings suggest that differentiated learning is an effective approach to improving students' oral communication abilities.

Keywords: *Differentiated Learning; Speaking Skill; English Language Teaching*

A. Introduction

Speaking is a crucial component of English language learning, encompassing pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. Despite its importance, many students struggle with speaking due to limited practice and conventional teaching methods. Differentiated learning, an instructional strategy that tailors content, process, and product to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, offers a promising solution.

Differentiated learning is a student-centred approach that addresses learners' needs by accommodating their learning styles, prior knowledge, and learning environment (Nisa 2023). Differentiated Instruction as the implementation of differentiated learning is an instructional approach in which teachers adapt the content, process, product, and learning environment to enhance students' learning outcomes (Arianto, Juhana, and Ruminda 2023). In other words, differentiated learning is an instructional approach that acknowledges and responds to the varying needs, interests, and abilities of each student. It is grounded in the belief that every student has the potential to learn and succeed, but

they may require different levels of support and instruction. It involves evaluating students' strengths, weaknesses, interests, and learning styles, and tailoring instruction accordingly to address their individual needs. This may involve providing students with different learning materials, activities, or assessments, or grouping students according to their abilities or interests. Differentiation is one of the key approaches that enables teachers to address challenges and respond to students' development by assessing what they already know, identifying what they need to learn, and providing opportunities for them to reach their full potential (Kupchyk and Litvinchuk 2020). Differentiated learning was introduced by Carol Ann Tomlinson in 1995. Carol A. Tomlinson, an educator since 1995 has written down his ideas in a book entitled *How to differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability classrooms* is about teaching that pays attention to individual differences in students. Then The idea is known as differentiated instruction or differentiated learning. In differentiated learning, The teacher teaches the material by paying attention to the level of readiness, interests and learning styles of students (Kristiani et al. 2021).

In short, Differentiated learning is learning that accommodates students' needs, where teachers use various methods to meet the individual needs of each student according to the characteristics, ability level, interests and learning styles of each individual, where each individual student is expected to have the same growth and students will perceive learning as meaningful easy and fun.

Previous studies (Arianto et al., 2023; Purnamaningwulan, 2024; Thohari et al., 2022) have demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing confidence and speaking proficiency. However, limited research has focused on senior high school students in Banyuwangi. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effect of differentiated learning on the speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN Darussholah Singonjuruh.

The study will focus on the speaking skills of students such as grammar, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and the research will rely on data collected from students in SMAN Darussholah Singonjuruh.

B. Research Method

The research area refers to the location where the study was conducted and data were collected. This research took place at SMAN Darussholah Singonjuruh, located at Jl.

Aruji Karta Winata Krajan No. 39, Dusun Krajan, Gumirih, Singojuruh District, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. The selection of SMAN Darussholah Singojuruh as the research site was intended to optimize the research process and outcomes, as the researcher had prior knowledge of the students' characteristics at this school. Respondents are individuals who provide written or verbal answers to research questions. To examine the effect of differentiated learning, the researcher applied a pre-experimental design, specifically the One-Group Pretest-Posttest model, selecting one class as the study group. A total of 34 students from one of the eleventh-grade classes at SMAN Darussholah Singojuruh were chosen as respondents through purposive sampling, aiming to optimize the research by selecting a class deemed most suitable for the study objectives.

This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. The research was conducted at SMAN Darussholah Singojuruh, Banyuwangi, with 34 eleventh-grade students selected as respondents. The instrument used was a speaking test assessing fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. A pre-test was given before the treatment, followed by differentiated learning intervention, and a post-test afterward. Data was analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with the help of SPSS to determine the significance of differences between the pre-test and post-test results.

This study employed a quantitative approach, where methods emphasize objective measurement and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data obtained through instruments like surveys, questionnaires, or existing statistical records, often analysed using computational techniques. Quantitative research aims to collect numerical data and generalize findings to larger populations or to explain specific phenomena. Therefore, quantitative research relies on measurement and is grounded in the assumption that the phenomena under study can be quantified (Watson 2015).

Table 1. Research Design

O ₁	X	O ₂
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Source: Arikunto 2013

O₁ : Pre-Test (before being given treatment)

X : Treatment (Using Differentiated Learning on teaching speaking skill)

O₂ : Post-Test (after being given treatment)

In this study, the researcher employed oral tests in the form of interviews and presentations, including simulations or demonstrations. The pre-test was administered once to assess students' proficiency levels, after which they were grouped accordingly. A post-test was then conducted once to evaluate their progress. Upon collecting the data, the researcher used the SPSS software as an analytical tool to process the results and draw conclusions from the study.

In the interview test, the researcher applied three types of interview techniques: structured, unstructured, and situational interviews. A structured interview involves asking predetermined questions in a standardized order, with responses evaluated using a specific scoring system. An unstructured interview is more flexible and conversational, allowing the interviewer to guide the discussion as needed—often used to explore the interviewee's personality, cultural fit, and interpersonal skills. Meanwhile, situational interviews present hypothetical or real-life scenarios to assess how the interviewee would respond to tasks or challenges relevant to the context of the study.

For the test the researcher will use interview for the pre-test and presentation for post-test. An interview test is a structured method used to gather information about individuals' opinions, motives, attitudes, or competencies. The interview test can range from unstructured formats, which allow for open-ended responses, to highly structured formats with predefined questions. Presentation refers to the structured delivery of information designed to encourage learning and comprehension among understudies. It includes different modalities, counting verbal, visual, and gestural components, and is regularly utilized in higher instruction settings to improve the educating and learning encounter.

Table 2. Speaking Scoring Rubrics

Scores	Fluency	Pronunciation	Grammar	vocabulary
1	Speech is halting, with long pauses, false starts, and frequent interruptions that	Pronunciation errors make speech very difficult to understand. Intelligibility is	Major grammatical errors that severely impact communication.	Very limited vocabulary. Communication is often impeded by lack of word

	prevent communication	severely compromised.	Grammatical mistakes make it difficult to understand.	knowledge or incorrect usage.
2	Frequent hesitations, interruptions, and pauses. Speech is slow and fragmented, causing confusion.	Frequent pronunciation errors that affect intelligibility. Listener often struggles to understand.	Significant grammatical errors that interfere with meaning. Over-reliance on basic sentence structures.	Limited vocabulary range and frequent repetition. Inappropriate word choices that obscure meaning.
3	Noticeable pauses or hesitations, but can communicate ideas. Speech flow is somewhat disrupted.	Pronunciation is understandable but requires effort due to frequent errors or unclear stress patterns.	Uses basic grammatical structures with some errors. Meaning is generally clear but errors are noticeable.	Vocabulary is sufficient for basic communication but lacks range. Some inappropriate word choices.
4	Speaks with generally smooth pacing, though may have minor pauses or self-corrections.	Pronunciation is mostly clear with minor errors in stress or intonation, but does not affect communication.	Uses a range of grammatical structures correctly with minor errors that do not affect meaning.	Good range of vocabulary with some minor errors. Vocabulary is sufficient to communicate effectively.
5	Speaks smoothly with natural pacing and few to no hesitations. Speech flows logically and effortlessly.	Pronunciation is clear, natural, and consistent with accurate stress and intonation patterns.	Uses complex and accurate structures consistently. No significant errors and excellent	Extensive, precise, and appropriate use of vocabulary. Communicates nuanced meaning with appropriate word choices.

			understanding of tenses and syntax.	
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Source: Brown & Harris 2007

C. Research Finding and Discussion

The pre-test results showed an average speaking score of 62.21, indicating weaknesses in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. After the implementation of differentiated learning, the post-test results revealed significant improvement, with an average score of 82.94. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test indicated a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), confirming a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. This finding demonstrates that differentiated learning had a positive impact on students' speaking performance. The results align with previous studies (Arianto et al., 2023; Purnamaningwulan, 2024; Thohari et al., 2022) that emphasized the role of differentiated instruction in improving learners' confidence, engagement, and oral communication skills.

The researcher conducted both pre-tests and post-tests to assess students' speaking skills before and after the implementation of differentiated learning. The pre-test involved 34 eleventh-grade students from SMAN Darussholah Singonjuruh, who were asked to introduce themselves and talk about their hobbies, family, and favourite places. The results revealed that most students scored between 55 and 75, with an average score of 62.21, indicating weaknesses in various speaking aspects, including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. After two sessions of treatment using differentiated learning, the post-test results, using the same topic, showed significant improvement, with an average score of 82.94, and most students scored between 80 and 100, indicating an improvement in students' speaking skills.

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test clearly shows that students' speaking skills improved after differentiated learning was implemented. The pre-test results showed limited vocabulary, hesitant speech, and grammatical errors, while the post-test results showed improved fluency, correct pronunciation, richer vocabulary, and better grammar structure. This confirms that differentiated learning affects students' speaking skills.

The application of differentiated learning has demonstrated a significant positive impact on students' speaking skills. By adjusting learning materials and activities to suit students' proficiency levels and interests, this approach fosters greater engagement and confidence. It also supports students in reaching their full potential while helping to reduce speaking anxiety. Students' responses to differentiated learning were very positive. They enjoyed learning activities tailored to their levels and interests. Their participation levels increased during class discussions, role plays, and speaking assignments. The approach, which encourages collaboration and self-confidence, makes the learning process increasingly effective.

In terms of fluency, students showed a reduction in hesitation and became more fluent in speaking after the treatment. In terms of pronunciation, there was an improvement in students' understanding of stress, intonation, and articulation. In terms of grammar, students' grammar usage became more accurate with fewer errors in sentence structure. In terms of vocabulary, there was an increase in vocabulary mastery, allowing them to express their ideas more precisely and appropriately. It revealed that differentiated learning is effective since the students got involved in the learning process.

The researcher's findings are in line with previous studies such as (Arianto et al. 2023), (Purnamaningwulan 2024) and (Thohari et al. 2022), all of which confirmed that differentiated learning improves students' speaking skills and self-confidence. However, this study provides added value by focusing on senior high school students and utilizing recording devices for more detailed assessments.

The study's findings indicate that differentiated learning is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' speaking skills. This approach should be considered by educators aiming to foster an active learning environment and address the diverse needs of their students. Moreover, the results emphasize the value of adopting more personalized learning methods in language teaching.

D. Conclusion

The study concluded that differentiated learning significantly improved students' English speaking skills. The approach enhanced fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, while also fostering motivation and confidence. These findings suggest that

teachers should adopt differentiated learning strategies to better address diverse learners' needs and improve speaking instruction outcomes in senior high schools. Students ought to engage actively in their education by frequently practicing their speaking skills and utilizing tasks that match their proficiency. They should focus on expanding their vocabulary, enhancing their pronunciation, and treating every chance to speak seriously, whether in the classroom or beyond.

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