Selected Strategies for the Improvement of EFL Primary School Pupils' Speaking Skills (Action Research)

Author: Habiba Mohammed Mahmoud, Habiba Talaat Sayed, Laila Samy Fathy, Mariam Adel Abdelazeem, Mariam Ahmed Fouad, Rana Ashraf Hosny, Shrouk Essam Shaker,

Supervisor: Dr. Asmaa Zedan El Sayed, Lecturer of TEFL, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Ain Shams University, Faculty of Education, **Program**: Department of English, Basic Education

Abstract

This research aimed to develop EFL speaking skills for 5th grade, primary stage students through the ARCS strategy. It started with a review of literature and previous studies related to ARCS strategy and speaking skills. This research represents a graduation project of a group of eight EFL student–teachers. An action

research design was employed. The student–teachers designed the study's instruments, namely, a pre/post speaking skills test and a rubric which were administered to the research group students to assess their speaking skills before and after conducting some speaking activities. The study results showed that there was a development of the students' speaking skills – grammar and pronunciation in specific. It can be concluded that the ARCS strategy is effective in developing speaking skills for primary stage students and hence it can be used in speaking classes for these students.

1. Introduction

Speaking English is an important skill for EFL students. It allows them to connect with others and share ideas. In the world, speaking acts like glue, holding things together. However, in many schools, students do not receive enough practice on speaking English. This is often due to classes focusing on more traditional teaching methods. Additionally, teachers may not speak English fluently themselves, classes could be overcrowded, or there might not be sufficient creative activities to engage students and capture their attention. All of these factors can make students feel unable to speak English proficiently.

The problem of this research is that students enrolled in the 5th grade, primary stage, at Abdul Aziz Al Saud Primary School, Nozha Educational Administration are weak in speaking skills and have difficulties to demonstrate correct pronunciation and grammatical structures while speaking. This could be due to teachers' increased concentration on other aspects of the language such as reading and writing compared with speaking.

After becoming aware of the challenges faced by EFL students in schools, particularly their speaking skills, it is imperative that we investigate these issues and devise appropriate solutions. Many researchers have employed various approaches to enhance students' speaking abilities, including Hybrid Problem-Based Learning (H-PBL), Task-Based Learning (TBL), Flipped Classroom Model (FCM), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Project-Based Learning using presentations, YouTube videos, and audio track imitations (YATI) (Arif Sarıçoban, & Karakurt, 2016). In our research, we utilized the Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS) model. The ARCS model, developed by Keller in 1987, is widely used in various educational settings, including traditional classrooms and online learning environments. Motivational strategies based on the model are diverse but may not consistently enhance student motivation due to the evolving student demographics, cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and technology use compared to when the model was introduced. The impact of ARCS strategies on student motivation varies across different student groups

and learning contexts, necessitating a thorough examination of empirical research to understand its effectiveness in educational environments.

The aim of this research is to develop EFL students' speaking skills. As a first step towards fulfilling this aim, the literature review presented in the next section aims to address the two research variables, namely, speaking skill and the ARCS strategies.

2. The Theoretical Framework

Speaking Skill

In the interconnected world of today, effective communication in English has become a critical skill, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. While conventional language learning methods emphasize grammar and vocabulary, mastering spoken English introduces a distinct set of challenges. This research investigates the intricate process of enhancing EFL speaking skills.

We scrutinize the complex interplay of factors such, pronunciation practice, and grammatical aspects of spoken language, as well as their contribution to fluency, all of which play a significant role in the comprehensive development of proficient EFL speaking skills. By critically examining current research and teaching methods, this project aspires to arm both educators and learners with insightful knowledge and practical resources to facilitate their journey towards confident English communication.

Speaking skills have been defined in various ways by different scholars. Bygate (1987, p. 3) defines it as "the ability to use oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts and feelings to other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the hearer". Bailey (2000, p. 25) perceives speaking as an interactive process where speakers aim to construct meaning through the production, reception, and interpretation of information.

Importance of speaking skill

Speaking is considered one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced for effective communication. Many language learners often encounter challenges expressing themselves in spoken language, facing difficulties in using a foreign language to convey their thoughts effectively. Some may cease talking due to psychological obstacles or the inability to find

suitable words and expressions. The modern world of media and mass communication demands a strong command of spoken English (Mujahidin, Muchyidin, & Entusiastik, 2023).

Speaking is a multi-sensory activity, involving paralinguistic features such as eye contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation, all of which influence conversational flow. It appears that culture is integral to how speaking is constructed, with implications for how English speaking is taught and learned (Sudarmo, 2021).

While the English language encompasses four essential skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – the latter reigns supreme as the most effective tool for communication. This dominance arises from the sheer prevalence of speech in our interactions. Mastering the art of speaking equips individuals with a unique set of advantages, empowering them to excel in various aspects of life. Effective verbal communication is not merely about exchanging words; it serves as a gateway to personal growth, academic success, and professional achievement (Dilobar, 2022).

The significance of speaking and mastering its skills will be tackled according to various aspects.

Firstly, **cognitive development**

Brain stimulation and knowledge acquisition. Speaking activates more brain regions than other language skills, enhancing cognitive flexibility, critical thinking, and memory. Furthermore, engaging in spoken conversations allows individuals to acquire new knowledge and perspectives from others (Agostini,2022).

Organization of thought. formulating spoken language requires organizing thoughts and expressing them coherently. This process strengthens critical thinking skills and ensures clarity in communication.

Problem-solving process. Engaging in spoken communication hones problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. These skills are particularly evident in leadership and negotiation scenarios (Terasne 2020).

Keeping cognitive functions sharp. Regularly expressing thoughts and reasoning keeps our mental faculties agile. Strong speaking skills contribute to effective cognitive functioning. In summary, speaking is not just about words; it is a

cognitive workout. By honing our speaking skills, we empower ourselves to connect meaningfully, collaborate effectively, and achieve our full potential (Guerreiro, Sebastião, & Pereira 2023).

Second, academic excellence

Active participation and presentation mastery. Speaking fuels engagement in classroom activities, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. Moreover, proficiency in delivering impactful presentations is vital for both academic and professional contexts (Sahril, Aziz, & Kamilah 2020).

Navigating the digital world. In today's digital age, speaking skills are crucial for online learning, virtual meetings, and professional networking. Effective communication via online platforms relies heavily on spoken language (Alfia, Sumardi, & Kristina, 2020).

Third, social interactions

How powerful speaking skills contribute to debate and discussion on one side and to leadership and negotiation on the other side. Confidently voicing one's opinions and engaging in constructive dialogue form the cornerstone of healthy debates and group discussions.

Furthermore, strong speaking skills are essential for leading teams, persuasively presenting ideas, and effectively negotiating in various situations. In conclusion, speaking is crucial for effective communication. At its core, speaking empowers individuals to connect meaningfully with others, fostering understanding and collaboration (Himeda Al Jawad, & Abosnan, 2020).

Finally, personal confidence

Confidence boost. Mastering the art of speaking enhances self-confidence, enabling individuals to express themselves with clarity and conviction (Ananda, & Hastini, 2023).

In conclusion, speaking skills are not mere tools for expression; they serve as catalysts for personal and professional growth. By recognizing their significance and investing in their development, individuals can unlock a world of opportunities, connecting meaningfully with others, collaborating effectively, and achieving their full potential. Every word spoken is a step toward personal transformation.

Characteristics of speaking skill

Speaking, as a fundamental aspect of effective communication, encompasses various techniques

that enable a speaker to effectively convey a message. Its distinctive nature sets it apart from other communication skills. The vocabulary in spoken language tends to be informal, diverging from the formality often associated with written discourse. Furthermore, the structure of speech is characterized by simplicity and directness, in contrast to the complexity of written sentence construction. The fluidity of spoken language, unbounded by strict sentence structures, adds an additional layer of dynamism to oral communication, distinguishing it from the more rigid nature of written expression.

Closely, speaking is linked to our ability to produce language. It is a manifestation of the human ability to articulate thoughts within the phonological, syntactic, and semantic framework of a language. As explained by Ibrahim (2007), this articulation enables individuals to convey meaningful messages, underscoring the essential role of speaking in facilitating effective communication.

However, the significance of speaking extends beyond individual proficiency; it is deeply interwoven with social dynamics. Speaking, according to Thornbury and Slade (2006), serves as a powerful means of establishing and nurturing social connections. It becomes a conduit for the expression of wishes, feelings, attitudes, and opinions, unfolding within the intricate tapestry of interpersonal interactions. In this context, speaking becomes a catalyst for mutual understanding and collaboration, elevating its role to one of social significance.

Recognized as a complex skill, speaking demands not only linguistic proficiency but also strategic awareness. Hinkel (2005) posits that speaking is among the most intricate abilities to master, necessitating an understanding of not just how to produce language fluently but also when, what, and why to communicate. This complexity underscores the strategic and thoughtful nature of effective oral communication.

Moreover, speaking is a multi-sensory endeavor, integrating nonverbal elements to enhance the overall communicative experience. Thornbury (2005) underscores the importance of factors such as eye contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, and voice modulation. These nonverbal cues, when harmoniously

combined with spoken words, enrich and elevate the impact of the communication, contributing to a holistic and nuanced exchange.

In conclusion, the characteristics of speaking skills delineate the dynamic and multifaceted nature of oral communication. By acknowledging and comprehending these distinctive traits, speakers can refine their abilities to convey messages with precision, resonance, and authenticity. This refined proficiency, in turn, enhances interactions and fortifies relationships within diverse social contexts.

The role of the teacher in improving speaking skill

According to Yousafzai (2023), effective communication in the classroom is a multifaceted endeavor that requires both comprehension and active participation. To ensure comprehension, teachers employ several strategies. First, they use clear and concise language, ensuring that their instructions are easily understood by students. Additionally, appropriate gestures and visual aids enhance comprehension. Repetition of key points reinforces learning and helps students grasp essential concepts. Regularly checking for understanding through thoughtful questions ensures that students are following the lesson. However, comprehension alone is not sufficient; teachers must also encourage active participation. Creating a safe and supportive environment is paramount. When students feel comfortable, they are more likely to engage in speaking activities. Incorporating fun and interactive exercises further motivates participation. Teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to express themselves verbally, whether through discussions, role-playing, or presentations. Active listening skills are also cultivated, emphasizing the importance of attentive engagement during conversations.

For Álvarez (2023), effective pronunciation instruction involves a combination of explicit teaching and engaging practice opportunities. Teachers should model correct sounds, introduce basic pronunciation rules, and emphasize intonation and stress. Using flashcards, pictures, and other visual aids can further support learning. To provide sufficient practice, teachers can incorporate repetition activities, pronunciation games, and student self-recording opportunities. Building a robust vocabulary foundation is equally

vital. Teachers introduce essential everyday words and topic-specific vocabulary. Engaging students through games and activities helps solidify their understanding. However, the true test lies in active use. Encouraging students to incorporate new words into their speaking exercises, writing tasks, and language games ensures that vocabulary becomes an integral part of their communication repertoire.

As reported by Sanako Blog (2023), effective grammar instruction involves a gradual introduction of fundamental rules, presented in clear and age-appropriate language with real-life examples. Relating grammar to communication helps students understand its practical application. Ample practice opportunities through oral and written exercises, interactive activities, and gentle error correction solidify learning and encourage students to view mistakes as stepping stones to improvement.

In line with Diamond and Gutlohn (n.d.), building a strong vocabulary foundation involves a combination of targeted instruction and opportunities for active use. Teachers can introduce essential everyday words and topic specific vocabulary, employing games, flashcards, and other engaging activities. Encouraging students to use new words through speaking exercises, writing tasks, and language games further solidifies their understanding and retention.

For Kannan (2024), diversifying language learning activities is essential for the teacher to meet different learning styles and keep students engaged. This makes learning English fun. Games and activities can turn learning English into a fun and engaging experience, helping students learn more effectively. Interactive activities include games such as vocabulary games, role-playing activities, language board games, storytelling, creative writing, and discussions that promote collaboration and communication. Individual activities such as reading, writing and self-recording allow for personal practice and reflection.

According to Skolverket (2022), fostering a safe and supportive learning environment is crucial for language acquisition. This involves encouraging participation without fear of errors, emphasizing learning from mistakes, and promoting peer support. Building student

confidence is equally important. By focusing on strengths, encouraging self-expression, and using positive reinforcement, teachers can create a positive and motivating learning atmosphere.

In summary, a skilled teacher combines comprehension-focused strategies with opportunities for active participation, ensuring that students not only understand the language but also confidently express themselves through speaking.

Speaking sub–skills

Speaking skills involve several sub-skills, including grammar and pronunciation, which are essential for effective communication. These components play a crucial role in ensuring clarity, accuracy, and fluency in spoken language. Mastering grammar and pronunciation enables individuals to articulate their thoughts clearly, engage listeners effectively, and convey their message with confidence and impact. In this discussion, we will focus on grammar and pronunciation in specific as main speaking sub-skills.

The centrality of grammar in spoken language acquisition has been a topic of considerable debate within language pedagogy. Olhstain and Celce–Murcia (2000) posit that effective speaking necessitates the mastery of various sub-skills, including vocabulary retrieval, grammatical pattern selection, and sociocultural competence. Grammar, from this perspective, emerges as a foundational element for clear and accurate communication. Understanding sentence structure and utilizing appropriate verb forms are critical for conveying meaning precisely and avoiding ambiguity.

Accordingly, a strong foundation in grammar serves as a key component of spoken language proficiency. While fluency and sociocultural competence are undoubtedly crucial aspects of communication, mastering grammatical structures empowers learners to express themselves with clarity and confidence.

Pronunciation is also an integral element of oral communication and should be systematically integrated into classroom activities. EFL teachers must be responsive to learners' needs and abilities, incorporating pronunciation instruction into English language classes. The ultimate goal is to empower learners to produce English words accurately and cultivate an awareness of the

significance of pronunciation within the classroom (Olhstain, & Celce-Murcia, 2000).

Given the time-intensive nature of correcting ingrained pronunciation habits, EFL teachers should guide learners in a gradual improvement process, both inside and outside the classroom (Thornbury, 2006). Employing a diverse range of techniques and strategies equips teachers for effective pronunciation instruction. As learners gain exposure to native and non-native speakers through listening and speaking activities, their confidence in using English will increase (Thornbury, 2006). For EFL learners to achieve comprehensible pronunciation, it is essential that EFL teachers possess a strong foundation in English phonetics and phonology, complemented by specialized pronunciation instruction training.

Several previous studies focused on the development of speaking sub-skills in EFL contexts. Siti, Flora and Sukirlan's study (2021) aimed to assess the impact of modified role play on students' speaking skills. Twenty eight students were involved in the research. The sample was divided into two categories, one of which was designated as experimental and the other as

control. Statistical analysis was used to interpret the data derived from the speaking test. The data were collected using pre and post-test. The pre-test was administered at the start of the treatment, and again after 3 meetings of modified Role Play. In conducting the research, the researcher used a speaking rubric to evaluate the students' speaking achievement which covered five components of speaking, i.e. fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehensibility. The results showed that the mean score of experimental group in post-test and control group were significantly different. The mean score of the post-test for the experimental group (24,571) was higher than the control group (20,143). The findings indicated that the modified role play positively affected the students' speaking skills.

Awad's study (2022) focused on the improvement of speaking skills by exploring the use of drama in the classroom. It involved (70) students who were divided into two groups, one of which received drama-based education and the other served as a control group. The results indicated that the drama group showed a

significant improvement in their speaking abilities compared to the control group.

Makhlouf's study (2021) aimed at investigating the effect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on improving speaking skills among non-English major engineering students at Albaha University. It utilized a pre-post speaking test and a speaking rubric to measure the progress of 20 students. The intervention involved using the AI-based mobile app ELSA Speak to develop fluency and accuracy. Results indicated significant improvement in students' speaking abilities in post-intervention, suggesting that AI can be an effective tool for teaching speaking skills. This study concluded with recommendations pertinent to using artificial intelligence as a tool for teaching speaking skills.

Lumbangaol and Mazali's study (2020) aimed to determine how debate techniques can improve students' speaking ability to make questions, give explanations, and give responses at University Potensi Utama. It involved 60 students from two batches and was structured into three cycles of classroom action research. Data was gathered using observation checklists and field notes. The results showed a marked improvement in students'

abilities to ask questions, explain, and respond, with their classroom engagement during debates increasing significantly from 42.83% in the first cycle to 85.17% in the third, demonstrating the effectiveness of debate techniques in fostering better speaking abilities.

Within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, proficiency in speaking is fundamental. Yet, learners often struggle with aspects like grammar and pronunciation, hindering their ability to communicate effectively. To address these challenges, innovative teaching methods and strategies, such as the Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction (ARCS) model, can be used.

ARCS Model

The ARCS, proposed by Keller, is a model which can solve the problem of speaking in English for students. According to Keller (1987), teachers should stimulate students' curiosity by relevant content tied to learners' experience (relevance). According to Molae and Dortaj (2015), implementing the ARCS in teaching-learning English as a foreign language results in improvement in fluency, coherence, vocabulary,

grammar, accuracy, pronunciation and overall students' motivation

According to Keller (1987), the ARCS model aims to boost students' motivation in learning. When applied to teaching grammar and pronunciation, the ARCS model provides tailored strategies for engaging learners and facilitating meaningful learning experiences.

Firstly, the attention component encourages educators to capture students' interest through stimulating activities. This might include interactive exercises or multimedia resources that arouse curiosity and encourage active participation.

Secondly, the relevance component emphasizes connecting language tasks to real-life contexts, making learning meaningful for students. This fosters intrinsic motivation and enhances their desire to master grammar rules and pronunciation patterns.

Building confidence is another crucial aspect addressed by the ARCS model. By providing opportunities for success and positive feedback, educators help learners feel more comfortable applying grammar rules and pronouncing words

accurately. Activities like peer practice and role-play in a supportive environment are effective confidence-building techniques.

Lastly, the satisfaction component ensures that students feel a sense of accomplishment in their language development. Recognizing progress and providing constructive feedback contribute to learners' overall satisfaction with their learning journey.

According to Chou (2021), the ARCS model has several advantages, including the following:

1. *Individualization.* The ARCS model underscores the importance of tailoring instruction to individual learners. When implementing this approach in speaking classes, instructors should consider students' proficiency levels, interests, and learning preferences. By providing personalized feedback and adapting activities to meet each student's unique needs, instructors can enhance engagement and motivation.

2. *Variety.* The ARCS strategy advocates for incorporating diverse instructional methods. In speaking classes, educators can

introduce a range of activities such as group discussions, presentations, storytelling, and impromptu speeches. This variety not only keeps students engaged but also prevents monotony in the learning process.

3. *Challenge.* According to the ARCS model, instructors should gradually increase the complexity of speaking tasks. Starting with simple dialogues, students can progress to more demanding activities like debates or oral exams. These challenging tasks serve as motivation for learners to improve their speaking abilities.

4. *Feedback.* Timely and constructive feedback is a crucial aspect of the ARCS strategy. Instructors should provide specific feedback on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary usage, and overall communication effectiveness. Positive reinforcement and corrective guidance help refine students' speaking skills.

5. *Intrinsic Motivation.* The ARCS model aims to foster intrinsic motivation. In speaking classes, instructors can tap into students' inherent interests by allowing them to choose topics, express opinions, and share personal experiences. When learners feel a sense of ownership over their learning, they become more motivated to actively participate in class activities.

Research by Molaee and Dortaj (2015) and Chu (2017) has demonstrated the effectiveness of the ARCS model in improving grammar and pronunciation proficiency. Their studies reported enhancements in grammatical accuracy, pronunciation clarity, and overall fluency through ARCS.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Munawarah, Kasim, and Daud (2018), the main emphasis was the application of the ARCS model to enhance students' speaking sub-skills. Seventy students were divided into two groups: an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). The experimental group were taught using the ARCS model, and the control group were taught using the Grammar Translation method. Tests (a pre- and post-test) and a questionnaire served as the data collection tools. The results

showed that: (1) students who were taught using the ARCS model saw a considerably higher improvement in their scores than students who were taught using the Grammar Translation Method. The z-test result (4.18) showed that the difference was significant. The data analysis results demonstrated that there were noticeable developments in the post-test scores as a result of applying the ARCS model.

Jeon's study (2020) explored how the best English teachers utilized motivational strategies in their classrooms. The attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (ARCS) model developed by Keller served as the framework for the analysis in this study, which examined the frequency and methods of use of motivational tactics in the classroom by the most effective English teachers. The author watched instructional videos from EBS (Educational Broadcasting System)'s "The Best English Teachers" and observed how frequently the top twelve English teachers used the ARCS motivational method. Although a significant portion of their strategy usage (n = 354) was focused on attention methods, they also made good use of other strategies (n =

149 for satisfaction, n = 144 for confidence, and n = 131 for relevance). Furthermore, the Friedman test demonstrated that the top English teachers used ARCS tactics in a well-balanced manner at the start, middle, and end of the lesson.

Sirait conducted a study (2021) which aimed to determine how using the ARCS model affected students' speaking abilities. The reason the writer is interested in studying the students' speaking abilities is that, from experience, she discovered that students find it difficult to react to what their teachers say, are uninterested in the materials, and lack the drive to learn English on their own.

In summary, the ARCS model presents a promising framework for enhancing EFL speaking proficiency by addressing motivational factors in learning. Through engaging activities, relevant content, confidence-building strategies, and opportunities for satisfaction, educators can empower learners to communicate confidently and effectively in English.

3. Methods of Research and the Tools Used

This research is an action research project that was conducted by a group of fourth year basic

education student-teachers during their teaching practice at Abdulaziz Al Saud Governmental Language School, Nozha Educational Administration, as their graduation project. The research group was a class of students enrolled at grade 5 (n = 15). During the experimentation period, the students practiced several speaking tasks and activities according to the strategies within the ARCS model.

The research attempted to answer the following question:

What is the effect of using the ARCS model on developing EFL speaking skills as a whole, and with regard to each sub-skill for 5th grade, primary stage students?

In order to answer the research question, the following hypothesis was tested:

1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the research group participants' scores on the pre and post-administration of the speaking skills test, as an overall score and with regard to the score of each sub-skill, in favor of the post-administration.

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods to better collect and analyze data,

interpret the results concluded, and assess the effectiveness of the suggested strategy, i.e. ARCS strategy.

Qualitative data sources

Qualitative data sources included the student-teachers' observation of primary stage students' speaking practice. During speaking activities, we noticed that students suffer from limited vocabulary, grammar errors, and pronunciation difficulties which can all contribute to a lack of confidence in verbal communication. Students worry about making mistakes and being laughed at or seen as incompetent by their peers or teachers. They are also afraid of losing control while speaking or being misunderstood or judged by their peers and teachers. This led to reluctance to participate in class discussions or ask questions.

As we observed the research group students before applying the suggested model, we concluded that students often face obstacles because speaking another language requires juggling multiple tasks at once. Students need to consider grammar rules, vocabulary selection, and proper pronunciation simultaneously. This mental juggling act can be overwhelming, leading to the

feeling of forgetting everything or stumbling over words. Students often struggle with mastering the grammatical intricacies of English. This can lead to errors in sentence structure, verb tense usage, subject–verb agreement, and word order. Incomplete understanding of grammar concepts, interference from their native language, and lack of practice all contribute to these mistakes.

For example, students sometimes omitted articles (a, an, the), misused helping verbs (am, is, are), confused verb tenses (past and present), or struggled with prepositions (using "on" instead of "in"). Pronunciation difficulties added another layer of complexity. Mispronounced vowels, consonant sounds, syllable stress, and intonation patterns all hindered comprehension and made it challenging for listeners to understand the speaker. Additionally, students also struggled with word stress, leading to unclear or mumbled speech. Examples included mispronouncing words like "play" (saying "blay") or confusing similar sounds like "th" and "z" (saying "mozer" instead of "mother").

At the end of application, we asked the students about their feedback in an open discussion. The students were asked if they were happy with these activities and what their feedback is. They mentioned that they were very glad to go through this practice on speaking because they usually do not practice speaking in their classes.

Quantitative data sources

Quantitative data sources included a pre–post speaking skills test and a speaking skills rubric.

The pre/post speaking skills test

The pre/post speaking skills test was designed by the student teachers and administered to the research group students in order to assess their speaking skills before and after implementation of the ARCS strategy.

Description of the test

The test includes a picture that shows a woman doing many things: taking care of kids like a mom, teaching them like a teacher, and playing with them like a big sister (Appendix A). It is like a story in four parts: Part 1: Mom helps three kids get dressed in their room. Part 2: Mom and a girl water plants, while a boy plays with the fish and another plays with a parrot. A cat watches them all. Part 3: A teacher is in a classroom teaching the letter "A" to four kids. Part 4: Kids are drawing

pictures in a room with decorations. They draw things like an apple. This picture was viewed to the students. Based on the picture, the students were required to answer 2 questions orally, which are: Describe the picture and who do you think are the people in the picture?

The students' answers were recorded in order to grade them later according to the speaking skills' rubric.

Speaking skills rubric

The speaking skills rubric was used to grade the students' speaking skills while answering the pre/post-test.

Structure of the rubric

The rubric consists of two speaking skills. Each of the two skills was rated according to a rating scale ranging from '1' to '3'. Thus, students could achieve a score starting from '1' (indicating lowest performance) to '3' (indicating highest performance).

The results of the pre/post-test were analyzed statistically. Statistical results will be introduced in the next section.

4. Results of Research

This research aimed to verify the following hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the research group participants' scores on the pre and post-administration of the speaking skills test, as an overall score and with regard to the score of each sub-skill, in favor of the post-administration scores.

Verifying the first null hypothesis:

The first null hypothesis states that "there is no statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the research group participants' scores on the pre and post-administration of the speaking skills test, as an overall score and with regard to the score of each sub-skill."

To verify this hypothesis, the mean ranks of the research group participants' scores before applying the suggested model (strategies) were compared to the mean ranks of the same research group participants'

scores after applying the model on the speaking skills test. Wilcoxon Test was used to reveal the significance of differences between the two administrations. Table 1 shows the results concluded:

Table 1

The significance of differences between the mean ranks of the research group participants'

scores on the pre and post-administration of the speaking test with regard to each subskill

(n= 15   degree of freedom=14)

SKIL	Ranks	Number (N)	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mean		Std. Deviation		Z - value	Sig.	Effect size
					PREE	POST	PREE	POST			
Grammar	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00	1.33	2.73	0.49	0.46	3.520	0.000	1.29 Very large
	Positive Ranks	15	8.00	120.00							
	Ties	0	0.00	0.00							
	Total										
Pronunciation	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00	1.4	2.53	0.51	0.52	3.314	0.001	0.79 Large
	Positive Ranks	13	7.00	91.00							
	Ties	2	0.00	0.00							
	Total										
Overall Speaking Skill	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00	1.4	2.53	0.51	0.88	3.441	0.001	1.29 Very large
	Positive Ranks	15	8.00	120.00							
	Ties	0	0.00	0.00							
	Total										

Table 1 shows that the mean score of the research group students' on the speaking skills pre-test as a total score and with regard to each sub-skill is greater than the post-test mean score. This reveals that the research group students' EFL speaking levels developed after using the ARCS model. In addition, regarding the results of "grammar skill" and "overall speaking skills", positive ranks =15, ties = zero, and negative ranks = zero. This means that the scores of 15 students (the whole research group students) increased in the post-test compared to the pre-test, and there are no students whose scores decreased or remained the same on the post-test.

Regarding the results of "pronunciation skill", positive ranks =13, ties = 2, and negative ranks = zero. This means that the scores of 13 students increased in the post-test compared to the pre-test, the scores of only two students remained the same, and there are no students whose scores decreased.

Furthermore, the significance level in EFL speaking as a total score and with regard to each sub-skill is less than 0.01. This reveals that there is a difference between the speaking skills pre and post-test as a total score and with regard to each sub-skill on the 0.01 level, in favor of the post-administration. Hence, we can refuse the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the research group participants' scores on the pre and post-administration of the speaking test, as an overall score and with regard to the score of each sub-skill, in favor of the post-administration scores."

To measure the effect size, the researchers depended on Abdel Hamid (2016, 279-280) who posited that when the Wilcoxon Test is used and the results reveal a statistically significant difference between the ranks of correlated pairs of scores or between pre and post-administration scores' ranks, we can identify the degree of correlation between the dependent and independent variables through Matched-Pairs Rank Biserial Correlation calculated as follows:

(1)................. $r = (4(T1)/ n(n+1)) -1$

r = the degree of correlation

T1= the sum of positive ranks

n = the number of pairs

(r) can be interpreted as follows:

(r) < 0,4   signifies a small effect size

$0,4 \leq$ (r) < 0,7   signifies a medium effect size

$0,7 \leq$ (r) < 0,9   signifies a large effect size

(r) ≥ 0.9 signifies a very large effect size

By calculating the effect size, it was concluded that the effect size for (Grammar ،Overall Speaking Skill) was higher than 0.9 which shows that the effect size for these two skills is very large. The effect size for (pronunciation) was 0.79 which is a large effect size. This show that using the ARCS model had a large effect on developing the EFL speaking skills for the research group students. Hence, the research question "what is the effect of using the ARCS model on developing EFL

speaking skills as a whole, and with regard to each sub-skill for 5th grade, primary stage students?"

5. Interpretation of Results

According to the statistical results of this research, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on the pre and post speaking skills test in favor of the post-test scores. This shows that the ARCS strategy was effective in developing speaking skills for the target students.

During the pre-test, our observations revealed a heterogeneity of students' learning styles. Extroverted students exhibited enthusiasm and a willingness to participate, driven by a thirst for knowledge acquisition, accepting the challenge of public speaking, or a comfort level with making mistakes. Conversely, introverted students displayed anxiety and nervousness, demonstrating a reluctance to participate due to their fear regarding errors. These students preferred quiet observation and needed additional support and encouragement from instructors and peers. By the end of this research project, the students with prior public speaking experience displayed a developed level of confidence and participation.

Furthermore, some students identified through the pre-test as requiring development in their speaking skills were unwilling to participate in the experience. We tried to motivate and reinforce them to enhance their comfort level and urge them to participate.

Following a series of implementation sessions, a reduction in grammatical and phonetic errors was observed, coupled with an enhancement in confidence regarding public speaking among the participants. The results indicated that while some students demonstrated rapid improvement, others required more intensive support. Overall, a statistically significant reduction in grammatical and pronunciation errors was evidenced in the post-test administered at the end of this research.

These findings suggest that while some skills, such as grammar, exhibited apparent development, others, like pronunciation, necessitated a more extended timeframe for improvement. This can be attributed to the brevity of the application and the frequent absence of students. During the activities, students demonstrated the ability to avoid grammatical errors in sentence structure, such as employing the present continuous tense to

describe current events or the depicted scene (e.g., "the girl is drawing a picture"). However, some students continued to struggle with pronunciation, particularly the distinction between similar sounds like "th" and "z".

These challenges in pronunciation can be attributed to the potential lack of dedicated focus on this skill within the regular classroom curriculum. Students required additional time to strengthen their understanding of pronunciation rules and continue refining their pronunciation skills.

Problems faced during research implementation

The researchers faced some problems during the research period. In fact, the skills targeted by this research, especially pronunciation skills, needed more practice and time. The results underscore the significant variations in the development level of each student, with some demonstrating rapid progress and others requiring more time, targeted support, and reinforcement to achieve proficiency. However, the time specified for our experiment was too little to develop all the targeted skills and apply the ARCS strategies

several times. In addition, the students were often absent, so we faced a problem to meet them frequently. At the same time, we attempted to make best use of the time available to develop the students' speaking skills as aimed by this research.

6. Conclusion

Based on the study results, there was a development of the students' EFL speaking skills – grammar and pronunciation in specific. It can be concluded that the ARCS model is effective in developing speaking skills for primary stage students and hence it should be used frequently.

Recommendations

The following are some recommendations to improve speaking skills for primary students, with a specific focus on grammar and pronunciation:

1. Students should be provided with opportunities to practice speaking skills.

2. They should be encouraged to engage in regular conversational activities where they can practice speaking in a supportive environment.

3. Teachers should model correct grammar and pronunciation. As a teacher, it is important to model correct grammar and

pronunciation consistently, speak clearly and use grammatically correct sentences to provide students with good language to follow.

4. Teachers should use visual aids such as pictures. flashcards which can be effective in helping students grasp the meaning of words and concepts.

5. Students should be guided in constructing sentence with proper grammar starting with simple sentence structure.

6. Regularly providing constructive feedback on students' speaking skills is also highly important. Teachers should correct any grammar mistakes and pronunciation errors, and encourage them to repeat and practice the correct forms. Positive reinforcement is also important to boost their confidence.

7. Teachers should also encourage students to communicate in English during classroom activities and provide opportunities for them to use language outside the classroom such as English club or language exchange program.

8. Teachers need to monitor the students' pronunciation and provide guidance when needed.

Suggestions for further research

The study suggests that EFL researchers may further investigate the effectiveness of using ARCS model in different EFL teaching and learning contexts. Below are examples of the studies that may be attempted:

1. Investigating effectiveness of other studies based on ARCS on developing speaking skills for students in higher grades.

2. Investigating developing speaking skills through ARCS strategies in an online context.

3. Exploring the students' perceptions on the effect of ARCS on their learning and on their speaking.

4. Replicating the study in a blended context on wider group of students

5. Measuring the effectiveness of other strategies concerned with speaking.

Acknowledgement

References and Sources

1. Agostini, V., Apperly, I., & Krott, A. (2022). *Second language learning at school enhances Theory of Mind skills.*

2. Alfia, N., Sumardi, S., & Kristina, D. (2020). Survival Skills in Digital Era: An Integration of Digital Literacy into EFL Classroom. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics, 5*(2).

3. Al-Khresheh, M. H. (2024). The role of presentation-based activities in enhancing speaking proficiency among Saudi EFL students: A quasi-experimental study.

4. Álvarez, M. M. (2023). *The importance of teaching pronunciation from the very first moment.* LinkedIn. Retrieved from: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips-2022/add-your-name-pronunciation

5. Ananda, N., & Hastini, H. (2023). A Study on Self-Confidence Impact of ELF Students' Speaking. *Journal of General Education and Humanities, 2*(3), 237-246.

6. Awad, H. (2022). Improving students' English speaking proficiency in Saudi Public Schools.

7. Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking.* Oxford university press.

8. Chou, M. H. (2021). An integrated approach to developing and accessing EFL students' speaking ability and strategy use. *Language Education & Assessment, 4*(1), 19-37.

9. Chu, M. (2017). The effectiveness of applying ARCS model in speaking and listening classes: A study in a Taiwanese

university. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 14*(3), 581–595.

10. Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (n.d.). Teaching vocabulary. *Reading Rockets.* Retrieved from: http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wpcontent/uploads/2016/08/Teaching-Vocabulary-article.pdf

11. Dilobar, A. (2022). The importance of speaking skills in English classrooms. *Talqin va tadqiqotlar ilmiy-uslubiy jurnali, 1*(4), 34–40.

12. Gilakjani, S. (2016). *How Can EFL Teachers Help EFL Learners Improve Their English Pronunciation?*

13. Guerreiro, V., Sebastião, S. P., & Pereira, L. (2023). *Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital, 20*(2), 127–148.

14. Himeda Al Jawad, A. S., & Abosnan, S. H. (2020). The impact of using small group discussion technique on enhancing students' performance in speaking skill: A case study of Benghazi University. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 3*(7), 189–198.

15. Hinkel, E. (Ed.) (2005). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning.*

16. Ibrahim, D. (2007). *The effectiveness of some cooperative learning strategies in developing preparatory school pupils' English speaking skills.* (Unpublished M.A Thesis). Zgazig University. Faculty of Education.

17. Jeon, E. Y. (2020). what makes them the best English teacher? An Analysis of the motivational strategy used based on ARCS model. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 20,* 263–278.

18. Kannan, P. (2024). *Enhancing English language learning through games and fun activities.* LinkedIn. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/enhancingenglish-language-learning-through-games-funpraveen-kannan-jvnec

19. Keller, J. M. (1987). Development and use of the ARCS model of instructional design. *Journal of Instructional Development, 10*(3), 2–10.

20. Lumbangaol, R. R. & Mazali, M. R. (2020). Improving students' speaking ability through debate technique. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics, 7*(2), 163–172. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348790896_IMPROVING_STUDENTS'_SPEAKING_ABILITY_THROUGH_DEBATE_TECHNIQUE

21. Makhlouf. M. K. I. (2021). Effect of artificial intelligence–based application on Saudi preparatory –year students' EFL speaking skills at Albaha University. *International Journal of English Language Education, 9*(2), 36–56. Retrieved from https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijele/article/view/18782

22. Masuram, J., & Sripada, P. N. (2020). Developing speaking skills through task–based materials. *Procedia Computer Science*, 172, 60–65.

23. Molaee, M., & Dortaj, F. (2015). Implementation of the Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction (ARCS) Model in teaching–learning speaking: Its effect on fluency, coherence, lexical resources, grammar, accuracy, pronunciation, and motivation. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6*(2), 307–314.

24. Mujahidin, M., Muchyidin, M., & Entusiastik, E. (2023). The teaching of listening through English podcast at pre–intermediate program of seventeen English learning. *Journal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Proficiency, 5*(1), 9 – 19. doi:10.32503/proficiency.v5i1.3285

25. Munawarah, J., Kasim, U., & Daud, B. (2018). Improving speaking sub-skills by using the attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction (ARCS) model. *English Education Journal, 9*(3), 356–376. Retrieved from https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/EEJ/article/view/12217

26. Olhstain, E. & Celce–Murcia. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A Guide for language teachers.* Cambridge University Press.

27. Pardede (2010) Improving EFL Students' English Pronunciation by Using the Explicit Teaching Approach.

28. Sarıçoban, A. & Karakurt, L. (2016). The use of task-based activities to improve listening and speaking skills in EFL context. *Sino-US English Teaching, 13*(6), 445-459.

29. Sahril, M., Aziz, C. N., & Kamilah, A. (2020). Enhancing Speaking Skills of EFL Students Through Debate. *Journal of English Education, Literature and Linguistics, 3*(2), 1-15.

30. Sanako Blog. (2023). *The direct method of language teaching.* Retrieved from: https://sanako.com/how-to-use-sanako-connect-to-deliver-lessons-using-3-leading-language-teaching-methods

31. Sirait, A. W. (2021). The effect of ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence/, and Satisfaction) model on speaking skill of eleventh-grade students 2020/2021. *Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris.* Retrieved from https://repository.uhn.ac.id/handle/123456789/4931

32. Siti, F., Flora, F., & Sukirlan, M. (2021). Investigating EFL learners' speaking achievement taught by modified role play at English speaking class. *AKSARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra, 22*(1), 85-104.

33. Skolverket. (2022). Effective strategies to reduce language anxiety and fostering spoken English skills. Malmö University. Retrieved from: https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1777349/FULLTEXT01.pdf

34. Sudarmo, S. (2021). The importance of speaking in English as a foreign language between skillful and thoughtful competencies: studying sociolinguistics perspectives. *Linguistics and Culture Review, 5*(81), 113-124.

35. Terasne, T., & Setianingsih, T. (2020). The Effect Of Problem Based Solving Strategy Towards Students' Speaking Skill. *Jurnal Paedagogy, 7*(3), 151-155.

36. Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking.* Essex: Pearson. Longman.

37. Thornbury, S. 2006. *An A-Z of ELT.* Oxford: Macmillan Press

38. Thornbury, S. & Slade, D. (2006). *Conversation: from description to pedagogy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

39. Yousafzai, A. (2023). Communicative language teaching. Zone of Education. https://zonofeducation.com/

40. Yaoud (2020) Developing the Speaking Skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Preparatory Schoolers Using Self-Study Strategies

Appendices

Appendix (A): The pre/post speaking skills test

1– **Describe the picture**.

2– **Who do you think are the people in the picture?**

3– **What are they doing?**

Appendix (B): Speaking Skills Rubric

Speaking Skill	Score		
	3	**2**	**1**
Grammar	– uses word order with increasing accuracy and with very few or no errors – uses pronouns and articles with increased accuracy and very few or no errors – uses prepositions of time and direction correctly (e.g. at noon, during, towards) – meaning is very clear	– uses correct word order, with assistance and has few errors (e.g. SVO; adj.–n.) – uses basic pronouns and articles with minor errors (e.g. he, she) – use prepositions of time and direction, with little assistance – meaning is usually not obscured	– may use single words to communicate instead of complete sentences (e.g. go, yes) – mixes basic pronouns and articles and may use them with assistance – uses prepositions of time and direction incorrectly – meaning is obscured
Pronunciation	– pronunciation is comprehensible – demonstrates good control of volume, intonation, stress, and rhythm – increased fluency level	– pronunciation leads to occasional misunderstanding – mimics some stress and intonation patterns and has little control of volume, intonation, stress, and rhythm – acceptable fluency level	– pronunciation may impede others' understanding – has no/very little control of volume, intonation, stress, and rhythm – very weak fluency level