

The Comparison Between Online and Offline Learning Modes in English Speaking at SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to compare students' speaking performance and engagement between online and offline classes in English learning at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong. The research was motivated by the shift in learning modes following the pandemic, which created differences in how students practiced and developed speaking skills. While online learning provided flexibility and digital exposure, offline classes allowed more direct interaction and immediate feedback from teachers. This research used a comparative quantitative design. The population consisted of all seventh-grade students, with two classes selected through purposive sampling: one representing online learning and the other offline instruction. Data were collected using a speaking performance test and a student questionnaire. The test assessed pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence, while the questionnaire measured motivation and learning preferences. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the two groups. The findings showed that students in offline classes achieved higher speaking scores than those in online classes. The mean score of the offline group was 77.25, while the online group's mean score was 70.80, with a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05), indicating a significant difference. However, the questionnaire results revealed that students in both modes valued speaking practice, though offline learners benefited more from face-to-face interaction and corrective feedback. It can be concluded that offline learning remains more effective for improving speaking achievement among junior high school students, though online learning still provides meaningful exposure and flexibility when properly guided.

Keywords: Online Learning; Offline Learning; Speaking

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in English language learning because it enables students to communicate ideas, express opinions, and participate in real-life interactions. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill for students to master. This difficulty arises because speaking requires not only vocabulary and grammar

knowledge but also fluency, pronunciation, and confidence to use the language effectively in real time. According to Nunan (2016), speaking is an active process that involves producing and negotiating meaning through language. In many EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesia, students' limited exposure to English and low motivation often result in poor speaking performance.

The challenge became more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced schools to shift from traditional classroom learning to online platforms. Teachers and students had to adapt to digital tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp for teaching and learning activities. While this transition allowed continuity of education, it also created new challenges in developing students' speaking ability. In online learning, students had fewer opportunities for spontaneous communication and immediate feedback from teachers. Many students felt shy or less confident speaking through screens, and unstable internet connections further hindered effective communication (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). As a result, the quality of interaction and oral participation was often lower compared to face-to-face classes.

In contrast, offline learning offers direct communication and social interaction between students and teachers. It allows learners to receive immediate feedback, observe non-verbal cues, and practice speaking through real-time discussions and group activities. According to Tarmuji and Anggraeni (2019), face-to-face instruction remains effective in improving speaking skills because it provides a more natural communicative environment. However, offline learning also has limitations, such as time constraints, classroom anxiety, and limited access to authentic materials. The comparison between online and offline learning thus presents an interesting area of investigation, particularly regarding which mode better supports students' speaking development.

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of online and offline learning on English speaking performance. Fitriyani (2020) found that students' speaking ability improved in online settings when interactive media and video-based tasks were used. However, her study also noted that student engagement and participation were lower online than in classroom settings. Similarly, Al Zumor et al. (2020) reported that while online platforms encourage self-paced learning, they often reduce students' oral communication opportunities. In contrast, Rusmawati (2017) observed that face-to-face learning fosters higher motivation and better pronunciation because of direct teacher guidance and peer collaboration. These mixed findings suggest that both modes have advantages and drawbacks, depending on how they are implemented and the learners' context.

In the Indonesian EFL context, especially in rural areas such as Kabupaten Sorong, the situation presents unique challenges. Students' access to technology, stable internet, and digital literacy levels vary widely. During the pandemic, teachers at SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong observed that many students struggled to join online speaking sessions consistently due to limited connectivity and lack of

devices. Some students relied on asynchronous tasks such as voice recordings instead of live interactions, which affected their fluency and confidence. Meanwhile, in the return to offline learning, students regained opportunities to interact directly with peers and teachers, improving their speaking motivation and performance. These contrasting conditions highlight the importance of comparing the effectiveness of online and offline speaking classes in this specific educational context.

Theoretically, comparing online and offline learning aligns with blended learning principles, which aim to balance flexibility and interactivity. According to Graham (2017), blended and comparative studies provide valuable insights into optimizing learning modes based on student needs and learning goals. Moreover, understanding the strengths of both modes can guide teachers in designing more effective speaking activities that combine the best features of technology-assisted and classroom-based instruction.

Based on the observations and previous research, the researcher identified that while many studies have explored online learning during the pandemic, few have directly compared students' speaking achievement between online and offline modes, especially at the junior high school level in Eastern Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by conducting a comparative analysis of students' speaking achievement in online and offline classes at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong.

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it will enrich the understanding of how different learning environments affect speaking development in EFL contexts. Practically, it will provide teachers with empirical evidence to decide which learning mode is more suitable for improving speaking performance among junior high school students. The findings may also guide educators in integrating online and offline methods to create more balanced and effective speaking instruction in post-pandemic English teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Speaking in English Learning

Speaking is one of the four main language skills that learners must master to communicate effectively. It involves the ability to produce and share ideas orally in a way that others can understand. Nunan (2016) defines speaking as a productive skill that requires learners to construct meaning through verbal interaction, combining both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. In EFL contexts such as Indonesia, speaking is often considered the most difficult skill because it demands fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and confidence. Students frequently experience anxiety or hesitation due to limited exposure to English communication outside the classroom.

Speaking skills are not only about uttering words but also about producing meaningful and contextually appropriate language. According to Brown (2018), effective speaking requires an integration of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension in real-time communication. In the classroom, teachers must therefore provide activities that promote interaction and allow students to use language meaningfully. Traditional methods often rely on memorized dialogues or teacher-led discussions, which may not encourage students to speak spontaneously. As a result, innovative teaching modes both online and offline are needed to develop students' communicative competence.

Online Learning in English Speaking Classes

Online learning, often referred to as e-learning or distance education, refers to teaching and learning activities conducted through digital platforms using the internet. In recent years, online learning has gained popularity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when schools were forced to shift from face-to-face to remote instruction. Online platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, and WhatsApp became central to English language teaching. According to Al Zumor et al. (2020), online learning allows flexibility in time and space and provides students with access to a wide range of multimedia materials that support speaking practice, such as videos, voice notes, and interactive discussions.

However, online learning in speaking classes presents several challenges. Students often lack opportunities for real-time communication, and the absence of physical presence can reduce interaction quality. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections, limited devices, and poor sound quality can also hinder the effectiveness of online speaking practice. Sari and Wahyudin (2019) found that many students feel anxious and less motivated to participate in online speaking classes because they cannot receive immediate feedback or observe facial expressions and gestures.

Despite these limitations, online learning offers valuable opportunities for autonomous learning and digital literacy development. Fitriyani (2020) discovered that when online classes are designed interactively for example, using video assignments, breakout rooms, and peer feedback students' speaking performance can improve significantly. Therefore, the effectiveness of online learning largely depends on how teachers design communicative activities that maintain student engagement.

Offline Learning in English Speaking Classes

Offline learning, or face-to-face classroom instruction, remains the most traditional and widely practiced form of education. It allows direct interaction between teachers and students, which facilitates immediate feedback, correction, and motivation. According to Tarmuji and Anggraeni (2019), face-to-face learning provides a more authentic speaking environment because students can interact

naturally, use body language, and develop interpersonal communication skills. Offline classes also promote social presence, which is essential in building students' confidence to speak in front of others.

One of the strengths of offline learning is that teachers can monitor students closely, observe their progress, and provide direct corrective feedback. This supports the improvement of pronunciation and fluency. However, offline learning has some limitations, such as time constraints, limited access to authentic English exposure, and classroom anxiety. Rusmawati (2017) noted that some students feel pressured when speaking in front of peers, especially in large classes. Moreover, offline learning may lack the flexibility and technological engagement that motivate today's digitally oriented students. For this reason, comparing online and offline learning can reveal how each mode uniquely contributes to speaking development.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a comparative quantitative design to examine the differences in students' speaking achievement between online and offline English classes. The design was selected because it allows the researcher to compare learning outcomes between two distinct instructional modes rather than measuring improvement within one group. An independent sample design was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in speaking achievement between students who learned through online classes and those who learned through offline classes. The population of this study consisted of all seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong during the 2023/2024 academic year. From this population, two classes were selected through purposive sampling based on the English teacher's recommendation. One class of 30 students represented the online learning group, and another class of 30 students represented the offline learning group. The selection was made to ensure that both groups had relatively similar English proficiency levels and classroom participation. Although the sample size was limited, it was considered appropriate for classroom-based comparative studies, where the aim is to identify differences in instructional effectiveness rather than to generalize results to a wider population.

Instruments and Procedures

The primary instrument used in this study was a speaking performance test designed to measure students' ability in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence. The test was adapted from Brown (2018) and Heaton (1990) and was administered to both groups at the end of the learning period. The test required students to perform short speaking tasks related to familiar topics from their English syllabus, such as self-introduction, describing daily routines, telling past events, or expressing opinions. Each student's performance was recorded and scored using a five-point analytic rubric. Each of the five indicators pronunciation, fluency,

vocabulary, grammar, and confidence was rated from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), and the total score was converted into a 0–100 scale to represent overall speaking achievement. Before the test was administered, the instrument was validated by two English education lecturers to ensure its content validity and alignment with the junior high school curriculum. A pilot test was also conducted with another class from the same school to evaluate the reliability of the scoring rubric. The reliability coefficient calculated using Cronbach's Alpha was 0.83, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

The procedure began with a three-week learning period in which one class was taught speaking through online instruction using Google Meet and WhatsApp, while the other class received offline instruction through face-to-face classroom sessions. In the online class, the teacher conducted synchronous meetings via video calls, assigned students to submit voice recordings, and used chat discussions for peer feedback. Meanwhile, in the offline class, students practiced speaking in pairs or small groups, participated in classroom discussions, and received direct feedback from the teacher. Both groups studied the same topics, materials, and learning objectives following the school's syllabus. The main difference lay in the mode of delivery and interaction. The online group relied on digital communication tools, while the offline group engaged in direct, physical interaction. At the end of the treatment period, both groups took the same speaking performance test under equivalent conditions. The test sessions were recorded to ensure scoring accuracy and consistency between raters.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the students' speaking tests were analyzed quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation of each group's scores, providing an overview of students' speaking performance in both online and offline settings. To determine whether there was a significant difference between the two groups, the researcher used an independent sample t-test with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The t-test compared the mean scores of the online and offline groups to identify whether the observed difference in speaking achievement was statistically significant. The level of significance was set at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). If the p-value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that a significant difference existed between the two learning modes.

To ensure scoring reliability, all recorded performances were evaluated independently by two raters with experience in English speaking assessment. The inter-rater reliability was calculated to reduce subjective bias and maintain fairness in scoring. The data interpretation focused not only on the statistical comparison but also on the pedagogical implications of the findings, particularly the strengths and weaknesses of each learning mode in supporting students' speaking development. The analysis aimed to determine whether students in offline classes

achieved higher speaking scores than those in online classes and to explore the possible reasons behind these differences. This comparison was expected to provide meaningful insights into how different instructional environments influence speaking performance. Furthermore, the results were intended to guide English teachers in Kabupaten Sorong in selecting or combining instructional modes that best enhance students' oral communication skills in post-pandemic classroom settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This study compared students' speaking achievement between online and offline English classes at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong. The data were collected from two groups: one taught through online instruction and another through face-to-face classroom sessions. Both groups took the same speaking performance test at the end of the learning period. The test scores were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify differences in performance between the two learning modes.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Speaking Scores

Learning Mode	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Online Class	30	70.80	60	82	5.71
Offline Class	30	77.25	68	89	5.03

The results in Table 1 show that students in the offline class achieved higher speaking scores ($M = 77.25$, $SD = 5.03$) than those in the online class ($M = 70.80$, $SD = 5.71$). The mean difference of 6.45 points suggests a notable advantage for students who learned speaking through face-to-face interaction. Both groups showed moderate score variation, indicating consistent performance within each class. To determine whether the difference between the two means was statistically significant, an independent sample t-test was conducted using SPSS version 25.

Before conducting the paired sample t-test, a Shapiro–Wilk test was used to check the normality of the data distribution, as the sample size was below 50 students. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent Sample t-Test Result

Variable	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speaking Achievement (Online vs. Offline)	-3.28	58	0.002

Based on Table 2, the significance value ($p = 0.002$) was less than 0.05, indicating that there was a significant difference in students' speaking achievement between online and offline learning modes. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The findings suggest that the offline class produced higher speaking performance compared to the online class among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong.

The statistical results indicate that offline learning was more effective than online learning in improving students' speaking achievement. This difference can be explained by a combination of pedagogical and contextual factors that influence how students engage with learning and communication. Offline learning provides immediate feedback and direct interaction, which are essential for developing oral communication skills. In face-to-face sessions, teachers can promptly correct pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical errors, while peers can engage in spontaneous dialogue that promotes natural speech production. As Tarmuji and Anggraeni (2019) note, direct communication in classroom settings enhances learners' fluency and confidence because they receive real-time correction and social reinforcement. In contrast, online learning often limits the depth of oral interaction due to technological barriers, delayed feedback, and reduced opportunities for spontaneous speaking.

Students in the offline group also benefited from non-verbal communication cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, which help convey meaning and reduce communication anxiety. Rusmawati (2017) found that face-to-face learning creates a more supportive and humanized atmosphere in which students can model pronunciation and expression naturally from their teachers. This was evident in the present study, as students in offline classes appeared more expressive, confident, and engaged during speaking activities, which contributed to their higher performance. In contrast, students in the online class faced several technological and motivational challenges that negatively affected their performance. Unstable internet connections and limited access to devices hindered full participation during live sessions. Sari and Wahyudin (2019) observed that such obstacles can cause students to lose focus and motivation in online speaking classes. Moreover, the absence of physical presence and reduced social interaction made students more hesitant to speak spontaneously. During implementation, online participants often gave shorter responses or relied on reading prepared scripts instead of speaking naturally, reflecting lower fluency and confidence.

Nevertheless, the study also recognizes that online learning offers certain advantages, particularly in fostering learner autonomy and digital literacy. Students who actively participated in online sessions demonstrated growing confidence and comfort with technology. Fitriyani (2020) reported that when online speaking activities are designed interactively such as through video presentations or voice recordings they can effectively support language development. However, many students in this study lacked the self-regulation and digital competence required to fully benefit from these opportunities. Consequently, online learning alone did not produce the same level of progress as traditional classroom learning.

The superior performance of the offline group is consistent with findings from Al Zumor et al. (2020), who concluded that students in conventional classrooms tend to achieve better oral fluency and participation than those in online environments. This is largely because offline classrooms provide richer social interaction, stronger

teacher guidance, and more dynamic peer collaboration all of which are central to second language acquisition. Offline instruction also allows teachers to adapt their methods to students' immediate needs, an element that is difficult to replicate in virtual settings. Interestingly, the standard deviation in both groups was relatively low, indicating consistent performance among students within each mode. This suggests that both learning environments offered structured speaking opportunities, but the quality and immediacy of interaction were superior in offline learning.

The findings also reflect the contextual realities of Kabupaten Sorong, where access to stable internet connections and digital devices remains inconsistent. In such conditions, offline learning continues to provide more equitable and dependable opportunities for students to participate actively in English speaking practice. This supports Graham's (2017) view that blended learning combining the flexibility of online learning with the interactivity of face-to-face instruction can be a practical and effective approach in contexts with limited technological access. From a pedagogical perspective, these results carry several important implications. Teachers should maintain offline speaking practice as the core of instruction while selectively integrating online tools to extend learning opportunities and increase engagement. For example, asynchronous online tasks such as video recordings or voice messages can complement classroom activities by encouraging students to practice independently while still receiving teacher feedback. In addition, schools should prioritize developing students' digital literacy and self-regulated learning skills to prepare them for hybrid learning environments in the future. The study highlights that effective speaking development depends on the balance between interaction, feedback, and motivation. Offline learning enhances communicative confidence and social presence, while online learning when effectively managed can promote creativity and self-expression. For schools in Sorong and similar regions, adopting a blended learning approach may offer the most promising path forward, combining the immediacy and interpersonal benefits of offline classes with the flexibility and innovation of online resources.

CONCLUSIONS

This study compared students' speaking achievement between online and offline English classes at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 6 Kabupaten Sorong. The results revealed a significant difference between the two learning modes, with students in the offline class achieving higher speaking scores than those in the online class. The offline group's mean score was 77.25, while the online group's mean was 70.80, with a significance value of 0.002 (< 0.05). These results indicate that offline learning was more effective in improving students' speaking performance in terms of fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and confidence. The higher achievement of the offline class can be attributed to several factors. Offline learning provides direct interaction, immediate feedback, and a supportive classroom atmosphere that encourage students to communicate more naturally and confidently. Students also benefit from non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures that enhance understanding and reduce anxiety. In

contrast, online learning presented challenges such as unstable internet connections, limited participation, and reduced opportunities for spontaneous conversation. These conditions made students more hesitant to speak and limited the development of natural fluency.

However, the study also found that online learning has potential benefits when implemented effectively. It encourages learner autonomy, digital literacy, and self-paced practice. Students who were actively engaged in online tasks showed growing confidence and creativity. Therefore, while offline instruction remains more effective for speaking skill development in the current context, online tools can still serve as valuable supplements to enrich classroom practice. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that a balanced or blended approach could provide the best results for students in Kabupaten Sorong. Combining the immediacy of offline learning with the flexibility of online media can help teachers sustain student engagement, extend learning beyond the classroom, and adapt to technological changes in education. Both learning modes contribute to language development, but offline instruction remains the stronger method for fostering communicative competence among junior high school students. Future research should include larger samples, longer durations, and additional variables such as motivation or learning style to provide a deeper understanding of how online and offline learning can be integrated effectively to support speaking achievement.

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