The Use of English Central Application to Improve Students' Speaking Skill

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the English Central application in improving junior high school students' speaking skills, with specific objectives to (1) enhance students' self-confidence in oral communication, (2) improve pronunciation accuracy and intonation, (3) increase learning motivation and engagement through gamified features, (4) foster learner autonomy and flexibility, and (5) develop fluency and vocabulary acquisition through authentic video-based content. Conducted over four weeks with 15 ninth-grade students, this research employed a mixed-method approach using observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Findings indicate notable improvements across multiple aspects: 86.6% of students reported greater self-confidence in speaking, while average pronunciation scores rose from 62 to 80. Fluency was enhanced as students extended their monologues from 40 seconds to 1 minute and 25 seconds, often incorporating idiomatic expressions such as *by the way* and *in my opinion*. Gamification elements fostered motivation, with most students completing 4–5 videos weekly, while flexibility encouraged independent practice outside the classroom. Additionally, 66.6% of students demonstrated learning autonomy by reviewing materials without teacher prompts. Despite these gains, challenges such as limited device access (26.6%), unstable internet connectivity, and decreased motivation in the fifth week were recorded, highlighting the need for varied materials and adaptive strategies. Overall, the results confirm that English Central is an effective supplementary tool for enhancing students' speaking proficiency, aligning with communicative and learner-centered teaching principles.

Keywords: *English Central, speaking skill, pronunciation, motivation, learning autonomy, vocabulary acquisition*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, English speaking proficiency has become a vital skill not only in education but also in professional and social domains. The ability to communicate fluently in English is often considered a benchmark of language mastery, as speaking involves both accuracy and fluency in real-time interaction. However, for many Indonesian junior high school students, speaking remains the most challenging skill due to psychological, linguistic, and contextual barriers. Previous studies have revealed that students often struggle with low self-confidence, inaccurate pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and insufficient opportunities to practice speaking in authentic contexts.

Traditional classroom practices in Indonesia tend to emphasize grammar and writing skills, leaving limited space for interactive speaking activities. As a result, students frequently become passive learners who rely on memorization rather than developing communicative competence. According to Brown (2001), speaking requires

not only linguistic knowledge but also confidence and interactional competence, which are rarely achieved through conventional methods alone.

The integration of technology into language learning has been increasingly recognized as a way to overcome these limitations. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) provides opportunities for immersive, flexible, and interactive practice. Among the various tools available, English Central stands out as an AI-powered platform that combines video-based lessons, speech recognition technology, and instant feedback. It allows learners to engage with authentic content, imitate native speakers, and receive immediate correction on pronunciation, fluency, and intonation. Furthermore, gamification features enhance motivation, while the flexibility of use supports independent and autonomous learning.

Although many studies have examined the role of technology in language learning, most research has focused on university students or adult learners. There is still limited exploration of how AI-based applications like English Central can be effectively implemented at the junior high school level in Indonesia, particularly in suburban schools where resources are often limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how the English Central application can improve speaking skills among ninth-grade students, with special attention to confidence, pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, motivation, and learner autonomy.

In the fields of English teaching included, technology can make the learning process easier for students to understand the material. no limited to speaking skills the technology is hopped can assist the students to study english. A technological advancement in language instruction is the use of programs that offer dynamic and captivating learning environments. English Central is an online learning platform that combines speech recognition, video-based lessons, and AI-powered feedback to help students improve their fluency, pronunciation, and self-assurance when speaking English. This tool allows students at SMP PAB 8 Sampali to practice speaking more freely and dynamically, circumventing the constraints of traditional classroom instruction. (Zheltukhina, M., 2023, Dennis, N., 2024, Jeon, H., 2024)

The root problems identified in this study lie in the low speaking proficiency of junior high school students, which is influenced by several key factors. Many students still lack self-confidence when required to speak in front of the class, making them passive and reluctant to participate. In addition, frequent errors in pronunciation and intonation occur, such as difficulties in distinguishing similar sounds and a lack of sensitivity to word stress and rhythm. A limited vocabulary also hinders students from expressing their ideas fluently and naturally. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of opportunities to practice speaking, as traditional teaching methods often place greater emphasis on grammar and writing rather than oral communication. Moreover, limitations in learning media and environment, including restricted access to devices and unstable internet connections, reduce students' chances to engage with authentic materials that could enhance their speaking skills.

Students are said to gain better fluency, accuracy, and general English communication abilities by incorporating this technology into the classroom. (Parawangsa, K., 2023, Mei, L., 2017)

Many of the students at SMP PAB 8 Sampali find it difficult to communicate in English in the classroom since they haven't had enough practice, exposure, or confidence. Speaking, recent studies have highlighted the growing role of technology, particularly AI-based applications, in enhancing English speaking proficiency. Alfian (2019) emphasized that English learning applications significantly support learner

autonomy, enabling students to practice independently beyond the classroom. Muluk et al. (2020) revealed that psychological barriers, such as anxiety, negatively affect speaking performance, but can be reduced through engaging technology-based platforms. More recently, Cahyono and Rosita (2023) found that AI-powered language learning platforms effectively improved university students' pronunciation and fluency, providing evidence of the benefits of integrating speech recognition technology into language instruction. Similarly, Harahap et al. (2024) reported that mobile-assisted applications increased students' motivation and confidence in speaking English, particularly in secondary school contexts.

In line with this, Dennis (2024) demonstrated that AI-driven feedback systems substantially enhanced learners' accuracy and intonation, while Nhan (2024) showed that students perceived AI assistants as highly supportive in developing fluency and vocabulary acquisition. Dja'far and Hamidah (2024) further confirmed that speech recognition tools positively influenced learners' pronunciation, providing immediate correction and fostering more natural communication. Collectively, these recent studies underline that AI-powered and application-based learning environments provide authentic exposure, motivation, and autonomy. However, there remains a limited number of studies focusing on junior high school students in Indonesia, especially in suburban areas, which creates a gap this study aims to address.

Therefore, a special learning application is needed to solve students problem. Building on this, Cabaltica and Arcala (2021) identified psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors as challenges in speaking, yet emphasized that technology-enhanced instruction can mitigate these barriers. More recent research by Cahyono and Rosita (2023) revealed that AI-powered applications improved pronunciation and fluency, while also motivating students through personalized feedback. Similarly, Zou et al. (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of real-time AI tutoring in improving students' communicative competence, showing that learners benefit from authentic video-based input combined with speech recognition features.

In secondary education contexts, Harahap et al. (2024) found that mobile-assisted applications increased students' motivation and confidence to speak in class, while Nhan (2024) reported that students perceived AI-based assistants as highly beneficial in improving fluency and vocabulary. Dja'far and Hamidah (2024) further confirmed that speech recognition technology directly enhanced pronunciation skills, enabling learners to receive instant corrections and practice natural intonation. Meanwhile, Zheltukhina (2023) emphasized that interactive and authentic video materials foster vocabulary acquisition, making students more capable of using idiomatic expressions in real communication.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that technology-supported learning— particularly AI-driven platforms—offers multiple benefits: reducing anxiety, enhancing motivation, improving accuracy and fluency, and supporting independent learning. However, most existing studies have focused on university students or well-resourced schools, leaving limited exploration at the junior high school level in Indonesia, especially in suburban areas. This gap underscores the importance of investigating how the English Central application can address core speaking challenges such as low confidence, inaccurate pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and lack of speaking opportunities among junior high school students.

Research particularly examining the effect of English Central on students' speaking abilities is still scarce, despite the fact that numerous studies have examined the use of technology in language learning (Rajesh, K., 2023, Muluk, S., 2020, Nasution, A.

2024). Research involving secondary school kids is still rare, especially in Indonesia, while the majority of earlier studies have concentrated on adult learners or university-level students. Furthermore, a number of studies have used self-reported data or general observations rather than doing a thorough experimental examination of students' progress in speaking utilizing AI-powered speech recognition technologies (Dennis, N, 2024, Nhan, L, 2024, Dja'far, V., 2024). Additionally, SMP PAB 8 Sampali, a suburban school with a varied student body, offers a unique context for examining the actual implementation of this application, because the majority of research has been carried out in metropolitan or well-resourced schools. This study is underpinned by recent theoretical perspectives on speaking skills and technology-enhanced language learning. Speaking is viewed not only as the production of accurate and fluent language but also as a communicative act shaped by confidence, interaction, and authentic expression. Recent work by Muluk et al. (2020) emphasizes that psychological barriers, such as anxiety, strongly affect speaking performance, which aligns with the need for supportive and interactive learning environments.

Within the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), scholars argue that digital platforms promote flexibility, learner autonomy, and motivation. Alfian (2019) confirmed that learning applications significantly enhance students' independence and engagement, while Zou et al. (2023) demonstrated that AI-driven platforms foster authentic communication by integrating real-world video content and speech recognition features. Similarly, Cahyono and Rosita (2023) highlighted the role of AI-based feedback in improving pronunciation and fluency among EFL learners. Motivation and learner engagement are also central to this framework. Jerković et al. (2022) found that online English learning increases students' motivation through interactive and gamified content, while Harahap et al. (2024) showed that mobile learning applications improve students' confidence and willingness to participate in speaking activities. These findings resonate with Self-Determination Theory, where external gamification rewards can stimulate intrinsic motivation by making learning enjoyable and meaningful.

Finally, learner autonomy is a critical component of technology-supported learning. Nhan (2024) and Dennis (2024) demonstrated that AI-based applications encourage students to monitor their progress and practice independently, allowing them to overcome individual weaknesses in pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. This aligns with the growing emphasis on student-centered and adaptive learning approaches in the last five years.

Collectively, these recent theoretical insights reinforce the relevance of integrating AI-powered applications such as English Central into junior high school English instruction. By combining authentic content, immediate feedback, and gamification, such tools can address common speaking challenges—including low confidence, inaccurate pronunciation, and limited vocabulary—while fostering motivation, autonomy, and active participation.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigates how English Central might help students with basic speaking skills issues like shyness, poor pronunciation, and a small vocabulary. By combining interactive video-based learning with AI-powered speech recognition, this study sheds light on how technology might improve language learning in a secondary school context. Furthermore, there is currently little study on English Central's efficacy at the junior high school level, despite the fact that earlier studies have concentrated on college students. By examining the actual classroom setting of English

Central, this study adds to the body of knowledge on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). (Ahsan, M., 2020, Cabaltica, R., 2021, Zou, B., 2023)

Method

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the *English Central* application in enhancing students' speaking skills. The quantitative approach was used to explore the impact of the English Central application on students' speaking skill at SMP PAB 8 Sampali, generate measurable data on speaking skill improvement, including pronunciation scores, fluency duration, and scaled questionnaire results. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach was employed to explore in depth the students' learning experiences, perceptions, and responses through classroom observations and interviews. The integration of these two methods was intended not only to capture the numerical evidence of improvement but also to uncover non-technical factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and challenges encountered during the learning process.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of English teachers and eighth-grade students from SMP PAB 8 Sampali. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select students with diverse levels of English proficiency in order to capture a broad range of perspectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). 15 students were involved, all of whom regularly used the English Central platform as a part of their speaking practice during English lessons.

Techniques of Collecting Data

This study used three main data collection techniques. First, classroom observations were conducted to record student engagement, their interactions with the English Central app, and the development of their speaking skills during the learning process. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and English teachers to explore their experiences in greater depth, including their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using the app. Third, questionnaires were distributed to obtain additional information regarding students' attitudes, learning habits, and their self-assessment of the improvement in speaking skills experienced after using the application.

The aspects observed in the data collection techniques in this study included student engagement during learning, such as their participation in speaking activities, their level of enthusiasm, and their interaction with the English Central application. In addition, students' speaking performance was also observed, including fluency, pronunciation accuracy, intonation, and the use of new vocabulary acquired from the learning material. This study also examined students' learning behaviors, including their independence in learning, frequency of app usage, and ability to utilize available features. Furthermore, students' perceptions and attitudes toward learning were observed, particularly regarding motivation, self-confidence, and their views on the benefits and challenges of using the app. Finally, the researchers identified technical and psychological challenges faced by students, such as limited internet access, boredom, or difficulty understanding certain materials.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. The analysis of questionnaire responses employed content analysis techniques to detect recurring trends and opinions (Krippendorff, 2018). For the interview data, the process began with data familiarization through reviewing field notes, interview transcripts, and speaking recordings. Subsequently, initial codes were generated to identify emerging ideas related to students' speaking development. These codes were then organized into broader themes such as pronunciation improvement, fluency, confidence, and engagement. The themes were reviewed and refined for coherence and relevance, followed by interpretation of the findings to derive meaningful conclusions from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

The results of this study demonstrate clear progress in students' speaking skills, which can be explained through the lens of recent theoretical perspectives.

First, the increase in self-confidence, with 86.6% of students reporting greater willingness to speak, confirms Muluk et al. (2020), who argued that psychological barriers such as anxiety significantly hinder speaking performance but can be reduced in interactive, technology-enhanced environments. This also resonates with Harahap et al. (2024), who found that mobile-assisted language learning applications increase students' willingness to participate and speak in class.

Second, the improvement in pronunciation and intonation, where students' average scores rose from 62 to 80, aligns with Cahyono and Rosita (2023), who emphasized that AI-powered platforms provide immediate corrective feedback that fosters accuracy and natural intonation. Similarly, Dja'far and Hamidah (2024) demonstrated that speech recognition tools strengthen learners' sensitivity to stress and rhythm by offering real-time error detection, which was also evident in this study.

Third, the significant growth in fluency, with monologue duration increasing by 112%, supports Zou et al. (2023), who noted that authentic video-based content combined with speech recognition encourages students to produce longer, more coherent speech. The use of idiomatic expressions by 60% of students further corroborates Zheltukhina (2023), who found that exposure to authentic multimedia fosters natural vocabulary acquisition and contextual language use.

Fourth, the rise in motivation and learning autonomy reflects the principles of gamification and learner-centered pedagogy. Jerković et al. (2022) showed that gamified learning environments enhance motivation by creating engaging experiences, while Alfian (2019) confirmed that language learning applications strengthen learner autonomy by allowing independent practice. In this study, 66.6% of students used the app outside class hours without teacher prompts, consistent with these results.

Finally, the challenges observed—such as device limitations, unstable internet, and decreased motivation due to repetitive tasks—mirror those highlighted by Harahap et al. (2024) and Nhan (2024), who noted that while AI-based tools offer significant benefits, technical barriers and content monotony can hinder long-term engagement. This suggests that sustainable use of such applications requires both technological support and varied instructional design.

In summary, the results of this study strongly reinforce recent theories that highlight the role of AI-powered and gamified learning platforms in improving speaking

proficiency. By reducing anxiety, enhancing accuracy, fostering autonomy, and motivating learners, English Central demonstrates its potential as an effective supplementary tool for junior high school speaking instruction, particularly in contexts where traditional methods fail to provide sufficient speaking practice.

Table 1. Summary of Classroom Observation Results with Theoretical Support

Observed Aspect	Observation Indicators	Key Findings	Theoretical Support
Self-Confidence	Participation in speaking activities. - Willingness to speak in class.	13 out of 15 students showed increased confidence; active participation began to rise in the fourth week.	Muluk et al. (2020): Anxiety reduction through interactive platforms; Harahap et al. (2024): Mobile-assisted learning increases willingness to speak.
Pronunciation & Intonation	- Accuracy of word pronunciation. - Sensitivity to word stress and intonation.	Average pronunciation score increased from 62 to 80; students distinguished between words such as *thinking* and *sinking*.	Cahyono & Rosita (2023): AI feedback improves accuracy and fluency; Dja'far & Hamidah (2024): Speech recognition enhances pronunciation and stress awareness.
Motivation & Engagement	- Number of completed videos. - Students' responses to material.	Most students completed 4–5 videos per week and found the activities engaging.	Jerković et al. (2022): Gamified platforms increase motivation; Zou et al. (2023): Authentic videos foster engagement in speaking.
Flexibility & Learning Autonomy	- Time and place of study. - Initiative to repeat material.	Students studied anytime/anywhere; 66.6% used the app outside class without teacher prompts.	Alfian (2019): Learning apps enhance autonomy; Nhan (2024): AI assistants promote independent practice.

Observed Aspect	Observation Indicators	Key Findings	Theoretical Support
Fluency & Vocabulary	- Duration of monologue. - Variety of language used.	Monologue duration increased from 40 sec → 1 min 25 sec; 9 students (60%) used idiomatic expressions.	Zou et al. (2023): AI tutoring develops fluency; Zheltukhina (2023): Authentic multimedia fosters idiomatic vocabulary acquisition.
Technical & Psychological Challenges	- Device/internet constraints. - Learning motivation.	26.6% faced technical barriers; some students reported boredom by week 5.	Harahap et al. (2024): Technical limitations hinder app use; Nhan (2024): Repetition causes reduced motivation in prolonged use.

The presents classroom observation results that illustrate students' development in various aspects of speaking. The most notable improvement was found in self-confidence, where 13 out of 15 students became more active in classroom speaking activities. This aligns with Muluk et al. (2020), who emphasized that interactive technology reduces speaking anxiety, and Harahap et al. (2024), who found that mobile-assisted learning increases student participation. In terms of pronunciation and intonation, the average score increased from 62 to 80, supporting Cahyono and Rosita (2023) who highlighted the effectiveness of AI-based feedback in improving pronunciation, as well as Dja'far and Hamidah (2024) who noted that speech recognition technology enhances sensitivity to stress and rhythm. The aspect of fluency and vocabulary also showed significant growth, with students producing longer monologues and using idiomatic expressions, consistent with Zou et al. (2023) and Zheltukhina (2023) regarding the role of authentic videos in fostering fluency and vocabulary acquisition. However, technical barriers such as internet instability and device limitations, experienced by 26.6% of students, echoed the findings of Harahap et al. (2024) and Nhan (2024), who reported that technological constraints can hinder digital learning.

Firstly, the use of the English Central app has shown a significant positive impact on improving students' speaking skills in various aspects. First, in terms of self-confidence, 13 out of 15 students reported feeling more confident after practicing independently using the app. This was also reflected in their increased participation in speaking activities and active engagement since the fourth week. As expressed by one student,

"Now I dare to try because I have practiced many times on the app" (Student B).

Second, in the aspect of pronunciation and intonation, there was an increase in pronunciation scores from an average of 62 to 80. A total of 11 students stated that the pronunciation correction feature in the app was very helpful, and they became more

sensitive to word stress and intonation. The teacher also observed that students were able to distinguish the correct pronunciation, for example, between "thinking" and "sinking."

Third, the app has been shown to increase student motivation and engagement. Most students consistently complete 4–5 videos per week and find the content engaging and engaging. This boosts their enthusiasm for speaking activities. One student stated, "Learning is like watching a video and being asked to imitate. It's fun" (Student E). Fourth, in terms of learning flexibility and independence, eight students expressed that they enjoyed the freedom to learn anytime and anywhere without the embarrassment of having to repeat material. Even students with lower abilities showed rapid progress. As Student F expressed,

"I like being able to replay videos until I get it. In class, it's awkward to keep asking for repetition."

However, the study also found several technical and psychological challenges. Four students experienced difficulty accessing the app due to device or internet network issues. Furthermore, in the fifth week, some students began to feel bored and less motivated to open the app, as explained by the teacher: "Some people are starting to be lazy about opening the app, they say they are bored." Finally, in terms of fluency and vocabulary development, the duration of students' monologues increased significantly from 40 seconds to 1 minute and 25 seconds. Nine students began using simple idioms and natural expressions in their conversations. One student revealed,

"I learned a lot of new words from the videos that were never taught in the books."

## Table 2. Summary of Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data regarding students' perceptions and experiences in using the *English Central* application to improve their speaking skills.

Measured Aspect	Questionnaire Indicators	Key Findings	Theoretical Support
Self-Confidence	1. I feel comfortable speaking English after using English Central. 2. I am more willing to try speaking English in class.	86.6% of students felt more confident speaking after using the application.	Muluk et al. (2020): Interactive tools reduce speaking anxiety; Harahap et al. (2024): Mobile apps boost students' confidence to participate.
Learning Motivation	1. I use the app several times per week. 2. I am interested in completing the materials.	Most students used the app 4–5 times per week and found the material engaging.	Jerković et al. (2022): Online learning raises motivation; Zou et al. (2023): Gamification sustains learner engagement.
Pronunciation	1. I have become more aware of my pronunciation errors. 2. I pay more attention to	73.3% reported more accurate pronunciation through automatic correction.	Cahyono & Rosita (2023): AI-based feedback improves accuracy; Dja'far & Hamidah (2024): Speech recognition enhances pronunciation awareness.

| Measured Aspect	Questionnaire Indicators	Key Findings	Theoretical Support
	intonation and word stress.		
Learning Autonomy	1. I use the app outside class hours. 2. I review materials independently.	66.6% of students used the app without teacher prompts.	Alfian (2019): Learning apps foster autonomy; Nhan (2024): AI platforms encourage independent practice.
Technical Challenges	1. I have difficulty accessing the internet. 2. My device is inadequate.	26.6% reported technical problems.	Harahap et al. (2024): Device limitations affect learning; Nhan (2024): Technical issues and content fatigue lower motivation.

The presents the questionnaire results, which further support the classroom observations. A total of 86.6% of students reported increased confidence in speaking, indicating that the application successfully addressed psychological barriers as discussed by Muluk et al. (2020). 73.3% of students stated that they became more aware of their pronunciation errors, consistent with Cahyono and Rosita (2023), who stressed the effectiveness of automatic corrective feedback. Moreover, 66.6% of students reported using the application independently outside of class hours, confirming the arguments of Alfian (2019) and Nhan (2024) that digital applications foster learner autonomy. On the other hand, 26.6% of students experienced technical problems such as poor internet connectivity or limited devices, which resonates with the findings of Harahap et al. (2024). Overall, the questionnaire results indicate that English Central not only enhanced technical aspects of speaking but also positively influenced students' motivation, autonomy, and confidence.

Table 2. This visual clearly shows that Self-Confidence and Pronunciation experienced the highest increase, while Technical Challenges remained significant despite a lower percentage.
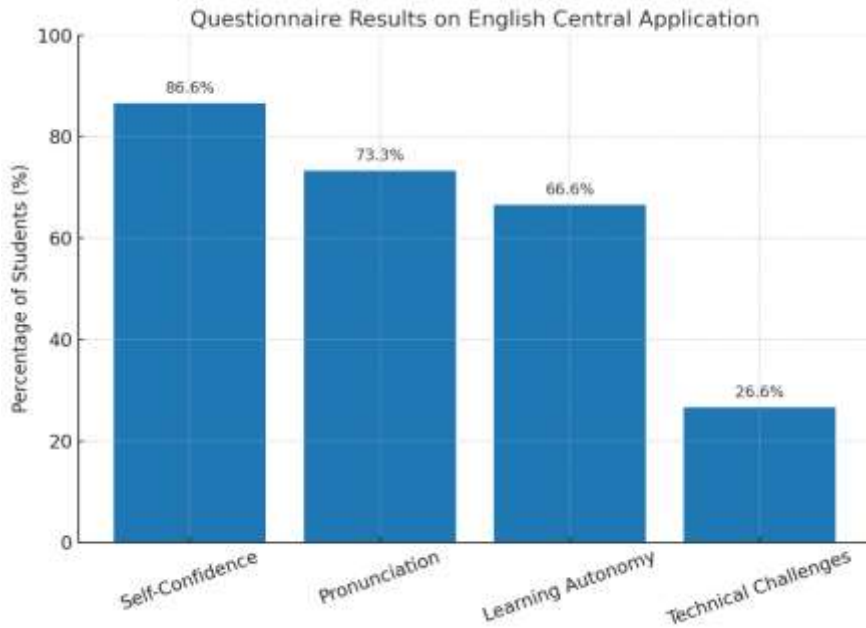
Picture 1. Questionnaire Results on English Central Application

The bar chart shows the percentage of students' responses across several aspects. A total of 86.6% of students reported increased self-confidence, 73.3% noticed improvements in pronunciation, and 66.6% demonstrated learning autonomy by using the app outside class without teacher prompts. However, 26.6% still faced technical challenges such as internet or device limitations.
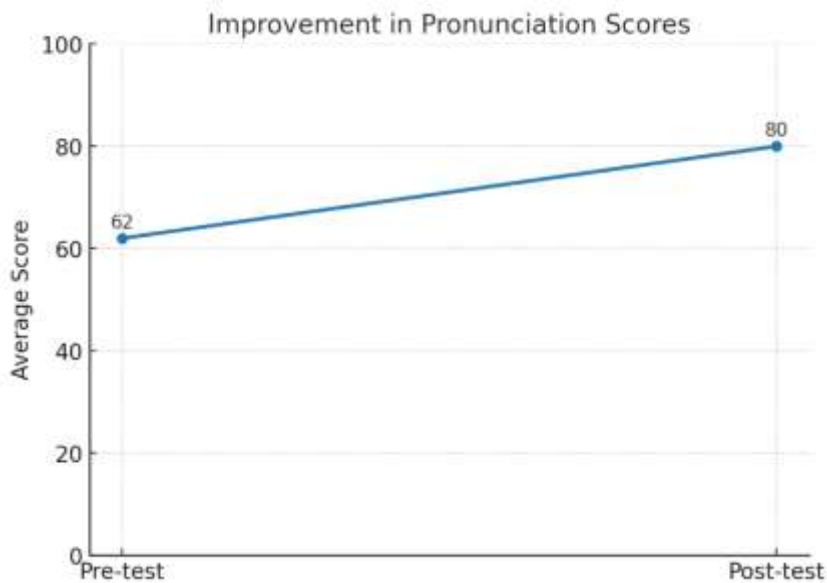
Picture 2. Improvement in Pronunciation Scores

The line graph illustrates a clear improvement in pronunciation, with the average score increasing from 62 (pre-test) to 80 (post-test), representing a 29% increase in accuracy. This indicates that the AI-based feedback of English Central was effective in correcting students' pronunciation errors.
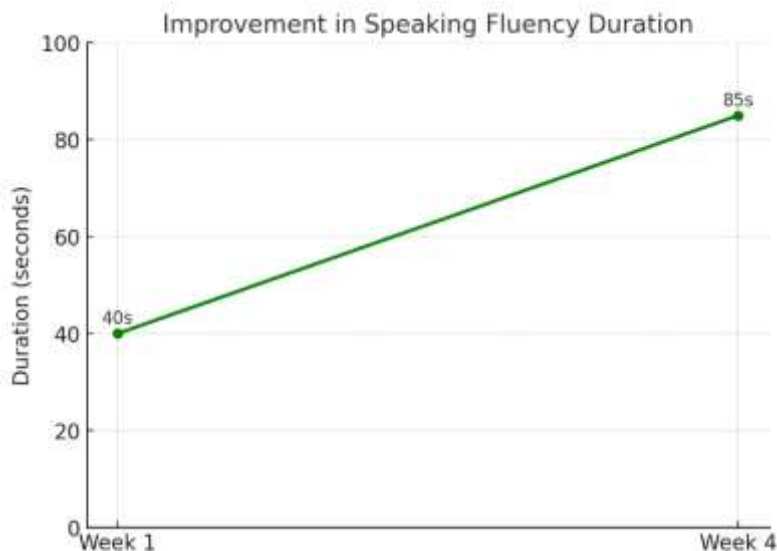
Picture 3. Improvement in Speaking Fluency Duration

The second line graph highlights the progress in students' speaking fluency. The average monologue duration increased from 40 seconds (Week 1) to 85 seconds / 1 minute 25 seconds (Week 4), showing a significant improvement of more than 100%. This suggests that repeated practice with authentic video content allowed students to produce longer and more coherent speech.

Table 3. Summary of Interview Results

Interview Theme	Indicators Explored	Key Findings	Theoretical Support (2019–2024)
Learning Experience	- Feelings when using the app. - Comparison with conventional methods.	Students felt learning was more enjoyable and flexible than traditional methods.	Jerković et al. (2022): Online learning enhances motivation and enjoyment.
Benefits of the Application	- Impact on speaking skills. - Vocabulary acquisition.	Improved pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary.	Cahyono & Rosita (2023): AI apps enhance pronunciation and fluency; Zheltukhina (2023): Authentic videos foster vocabulary growth.
Usage Challenges	- Technical barriers. - Psychological barriers.	Internet issues, boredom, and difficulty with accents.	Harahap et al. (2024): Technical limitations affect engagement; Nhan (2024): Content repetition lowers motivation.
Attitude Changes	- Willingness to participate. - Learning autonomy.	Students became more willing to speak and practice independently.	Alfian (2019): Learning apps promote autonomy; Zou et al. (2023): AI tutoring encourages active participation.

Interview Theme	Indicators Explored	Key Findings	Theoretical Support (2019–2024)
Suggestions for Development	- Expectations for content and features.	Students wanted more varied video content and interactive challenges.	Zou et al. (2023): Diverse, authentic materials sustain engagement in learning.

This summarizes the interview results, providing deeper insights into students' experiences with English Central. Most students reported that learning with the application was more enjoyable and flexible compared to traditional methods, confirming the findings of Jerković et al. (2022) on the motivational impact of online learning. Regarding the benefits, students highlighted improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary, which are in line with Cahyono and Rosita (2023) and Zheltukhina (2023). However, challenges were also noted, particularly technical issues such as unstable internet and psychological issues such as boredom with repetitive content, supporting the findings of Nhan (2024). Furthermore, students demonstrated changes in attitude, becoming more willing to participate and practicing more independently. This supports Alfian (2019) and Zou et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of digital tools in fostering learner autonomy and active participation. These findings confirm that English Central not only serves as a technical tool for improving speaking but also reshapes students' motivation, learning attitudes, and engagement in English language learning.

This provides a summary of the semi-structured interview findings, which were conducted with selected students and the English teacher to explore their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and suggestions regarding the use of English Central. In terms of learning experience, students consistently reported that using the application was more enjoyable and flexible compared to traditional classroom methods. They highlighted that the interactive videos and instant feedback created a learning environment that was less stressful and more engaging, which aligns with Jerković et al. (2022), who found that online platforms increase motivation and enjoyment.

Regarding the perceived benefits, students emphasized noticeable improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition. They stated that the automatic feedback helped them correct pronunciation in real time, while authentic video materials introduced new words and idiomatic expressions not found in textbooks. These findings are consistent with Cahyono and Rosita (2023) on the impact of AI-based feedback and Zheltukhina (2023), who emphasized the role of authentic videos in vocabulary development.

Nevertheless, students also identified several challenges. Technical barriers, such as unstable internet and low-specification devices, were frequently mentioned, alongside psychological issues like boredom from repetitive features or difficulty in understanding certain accents. These challenges support the studies of Harahap et al. (2024) and Nhan (2024), who noted that technical limitations and content fatigue may reduce learner engagement in prolonged use.

The interviews further revealed significant changes in attitude. Many students reported becoming more willing to speak in class and were motivated to practice independently at home, without being prompted by the teacher. This reflects Alfian's

(2019) and Zou et al.'s (2023) findings that language learning applications foster autonomy and encourage more active participation.

Finally, students provided several suggestions for development, including requests for more varied video content, interactive speaking challenges, and offline learning features. Such recommendations are in line with Zou et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of diversifying authentic materials to maintain long-term engagement. Overall, the interview data reinforce the observation and questionnaire results, demonstrating that English Central not only improves technical aspects of speaking but also reshapes learners' motivation, autonomy, and classroom participation.

Discussion

The integration of classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews provides a comprehensive understanding of how the English Central application influenced students' speaking skills. The triangulation of these three data sources not only validates the findings but also offers a more nuanced perspective.

From the classroom observations (Table 1), students demonstrated noticeable improvements in confidence, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary use. This was supported by questionnaire results (Table 2), in which 86.6% of students reported increased self-confidence, 73.3% acknowledged greater pronunciation awareness, and 66.6% practiced independently outside of class. These quantitative data align with the qualitative evidence from interviews (Table 3), where students expressed that the application provided a more enjoyable and flexible learning experience compared to traditional methods.

The convergence of data also strengthens the interpretation of pronunciation improvement. Observations recorded an increase in average pronunciation scores from 62 to 80, while questionnaires revealed that most students became more aware of their errors. Interviews further confirmed that students appreciated the instant feedback feature, which helped them distinguish subtle differences in sounds and intonation patterns. Together, these findings reinforce the effectiveness of AI-driven corrective feedback as highlighted by Cahyono and Rosita (2023) and Dja'far and Hamidah (2024).

Similarly, fluency development was evident across data sources. Observations showed an increase in monologue duration from 40 seconds to 85 seconds, questionnaires confirmed greater speaking confidence, and interviews revealed that students felt more capable of producing extended and coherent speech. This triangulation supports Zou et al. (2023) and Zheltukhina (2023), who emphasized the role of authentic video content in encouraging natural expression and vocabulary growth.

Motivation and autonomy also emerged as consistent themes. Observations revealed frequent use of the app both inside and outside the classroom, questionnaires indicated that most students practiced 4–5 videos weekly, and interviews showed that learners appreciated the flexibility to study at their own pace. These combined findings align with Jerković et al. (2022), Alfian (2019), and Nhan (2024), confirming that gamification and learner-centered digital tools foster sustained engagement and independence.

Finally, the triangulated data highlighted challenges that must be addressed. Observations recorded decreased motivation in the fifth week, questionnaires revealed that 26.6% of students struggled with internet or device limitations, and interviews echoed similar concerns about boredom and technical difficulties. These issues resonate with Harahap et al. (2024) and Nhan (2024), who stressed that while digital platforms

provide significant benefits, long-term use requires varied content and reliable technological support.

Taken together, these results confirm that the English Central application aligns with contemporary theories of CALL and learner-centered pedagogy by providing authentic input, personalized feedback, and motivational features that empower students to improve their speaking skills. The convergence of improvements across self-confidence, pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, motivation, and autonomy demonstrates that digital platforms, when thoughtfully integrated, can address multiple aspects of speaking development simultaneously. At the same time, the identified challenges highlight the importance of balancing technological innovation with adaptive teaching practices to ensure long-term effectiveness in secondary school contexts.

Conclusion

The present study explored the role of the *English Central* application in enhancing the speaking abilities of junior high school students, with a particular emphasis on self-confidence, pronunciation, intonation, motivation, engagement, flexibility, autonomy, fluency, and vocabulary growth. Conducted over a four-week period with 15 ninth-grade participants, the research revealed consistent improvements across these target areas.

To begin with, the use of *English Central* had a substantial impact on students' self-confidence in oral communication. Learners demonstrated greater initiative in speaking without prompts and showed reduced hesitation during class interactions, affirming that addressing affective barriers is essential for developing speaking competence. In addition, the AI-based pronunciation feedback provided by the application significantly enhanced pronunciation accuracy and intonation patterns, as students became more attentive to word stress, vowel articulation, and overall rhythm.

In terms of motivation and engagement, the combination of authentic video-based learning materials and gamified features encouraged regular practice, both in school and independently at home. This flexible learning environment also benefited autonomy, especially for lower-proficiency learners who could repeat lessons at their own pace until mastery was achieved. Furthermore, notable progress was observed in fluency and vocabulary, with learners delivering longer, more coherent monologues and naturally incorporating idiomatic expressions sourced from authentic contexts.

Nevertheless, the research also identified several challenges. Technical constraints, including device limitations and unstable internet connectivity, occasionally hindered participation, while psychological factors, such as decreased enthusiasm over prolonged use, suggested the need for varied instructional approaches to sustain learner interest.

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