



Students' Perceptions of English Speaking Learning in Online and Offline Classes: A Case Study of Intensive Course Class (*Persepsi Mahasiswa terhadap Pembelajaran Berbicara Bahasa Inggris pada Kelas Daring dan Luring: Studi Kasus pada Kelas Kursus Intensif*)

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: 4 Agustus 2025 Revised: 26 Agustus 2025 Accepted: 27 Agustus 2025	This study explores students' perceptions of English speaking learning in online and offline classes, focusing on the Intensive Course class at Gorontalo State University. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires and documentation of students' GPA in speaking-related courses. The participants were students from the 2021 cohort (online learning) and 2022 cohort (offline learning). The study examined seven key components of speaking skills: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, and engagement. The results indicate that students who experienced offline learning reported more positive perceptions across almost all components, attributing their improvement to real-time interaction, direct feedback, and active class participation. Meanwhile, students in online learning perceived improvement particularly in pronunciation and fluency, supported by independent practice and flexible access to digital resources, yet faced challenges in engagement and interaction. Despite these perception differences, the average GPA between the two groups was relatively similar. The findings, interpreted through Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, highlight the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in speaking skill development. Overall, offline learning was perceived as more effective in fostering speaking competence.
Keywords: Students' Perceptions Speaking Skills Online Learning Offline Learning Intensive Course	
Kata Kunci: Persepsi Mahasiswa Keterampilan Berbicara Pembelajaran Daring Pembelajaran Luring Kursus Intensif	Abstrak Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa tentang pembelajaran berbicara bahasa Inggris di kelas online dan offline, dengan fokus pada kelas Intensive Course di Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner tertutup dan dokumentasi IPK mahasiswa dalam mata kuliah yang berhubungan dengan berbicara. Para peserta adalah mahasiswa dari angkatan 2021 (pembelajaran daring) dan angkatan 2022 (pembelajaran luring). Studi ini meneliti tujuh komponen utama keterampilan berbicara: kelancaran, pengucapan, tata bahasa, kosakata, pemahaman, kepercayaan diri, dan keterlibatan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang mengalami pembelajaran offline melaporkan persepsi yang lebih positif di hampir semua komponen, mengaitkan peningkatan mereka dengan interaksi waktu nyata, umpan balik langsung, dan partisipasi aktif di kelas. Sementara itu, siswa yang mengikuti pembelajaran online merasakan peningkatan terutama dalam pengucapan dan kelancaran, didukung oleh latihan mandiri dan akses yang fleksibel ke sumber daya digital, namun menghadapi tantangan dalam keterlibatan dan interaksi. Terlepas dari perbedaan

persepsi ini, IPK rata-rata antara kedua kelompok relatif sama. Temuan ini, yang ditafsirkan melalui Teori Sosiokultural Vygotsky, menyoroti pentingnya interaksi sosial dan perancah dalam pengembangan keterampilan berbicara. Secara keseluruhan, pembelajaran secara offline dianggap lebih efektif dalam menumbuhkan kompetensi berbicara.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a core process in education that involves interaction among students, teachers, and learning materials within a structured environment. This process not only aims to transfer knowledge but also to develop essential skills, attitudes, and values that support individual growth and active participation in society. Over time, educational methods have adapted by incorporating various approaches and technologies to meet the changing needs of learners (Adera, 2025).

In recent years, the education landscape has undergone dynamic changes along with the rapid integration of digital technology, which has driven a shift from traditional classroom-based learning to online or blended learning models (Zou et al., 2025). This transformation has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced educational institutions around the world, including Indonesia, to quickly adopt distance learning systems. While this transition brings a number of advantages such as greater flexibility and accessibility, concerns have also been raised about the effectiveness of online learning, particularly in the acquisition of practical skills such as English speaking. Speaking is a productive skill that demands real-time interaction, consistent practice and immediate feedback-elements that are often limited in online learning environments. This raises important questions about the extent to which online learning can optimally meet the needs of speaking skill development.

Speaking is one of the most complex as well as the most challenging productive skills in language learning, especially in a foreign language context such as in Indonesia. This skill not only demands mastery of linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension, but also psychological readiness such as confidence, spontaneity, and communicative adaptability. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, the development of speaking skills will be more effective if it takes place in a social context through guided interaction, which occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and is supported by scaffolding from more knowledgeable people. Effective speaking instruction therefore relies heavily on active interaction, immediate feedback and authentic communication experiences - conditions that are naturally more facilitated in offline (face-to-face) classrooms. In contrast, online learning environments tend to limit real-time interactions and reduce non-verbal communication cues, which can affect students' speaking skill development.

Several studies have discussed the perceived effectiveness of both learning modes. Alawamleh et al. (2020) and Widiyono (2020) argue that offline learning is more effective due to the obstacles students face in online settings, such as lack of motivation and limited interaction. Rahmat (2022) also emphasizes that offline learning enhances focus, teamwork, and classroom engagement. Conversely, online learning is praised for its flexibility, accessibility, and support for self-paced learning, especially in areas such as pronunciation and grammar (Salleh et al., 2020; Krisyanti & Taufiq, 2023).

This study investigates students' perceptions of English speaking learning in online and offline classes in the Intensive Course (IC) program at Gorontalo State University. It aims to provide insights into how students evaluate their learning experiences in developing speaking skills, and how these perceptions align with their academic outcomes. By comparing perceptions across both learning modes, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of effective language instruction strategies in post-pandemic education.

However, existing research on this topic often generalizes the comparison between online and offline learning and lacks a specific focus on students' lived experiences in structured programs such as Intensive Courses. Moreover, there is limited attention to how students perceive the development of individual components of speaking—such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, and engagement—across different learning environments. These components, when examined separately, can offer more nuanced insights into how each modality supports (or hinders) specific areas of speaking performance.

In addition, many previous studies rely solely on perception data, without integrating objective indicators such as academic performance. To address this gap, the present study incorporates both perception data collected through a structured questionnaire and academic documentation in the form of students' Grade Point Averages (GPA) from speaking-related courses. This mixed approach enables a more holistic understanding of learning effectiveness and supports the triangulation of subjective and objective data sources.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore students' perceptions of English speaking learning in both online and offline classes within the Intensive Course program at Gorontalo State University. The case study method was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of the experiences of a specific group within a defined context, providing rich insights into the social and academic dynamics of language learning (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Yin, 2014). The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as the research focused on interpreting how students construct meaning from their learning experiences rather than quantifying results (Tisdell et al., 2025).

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at the English Education Department, Gorontalo State University, over approximately one month. The participants consisted of two cohorts of Intensive Course students: the 2021 cohort, which engaged in online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2022 cohort, which resumed offline (face-to-face) learning. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on their direct exposure to one specific learning modality (Patton, 2015). In total, 14 students participated: 5 students from the online learning group and 9 students from the offline learning group.

2.3 Research Instruments

The main research instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions of their English speaking skill development. The questionnaire included 10 closed-ended items developed based on seven essential components of speaking skills: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, and engagement. These components were derived from the theoretical framework of language learning proposed by Brown (2004). Each item was rated on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* (Likert, 1932).

In addition to the questionnaire, academic documentation in the form of students' Grade Point Average (GPA) in speaking-related courses was collected to strengthen the validity of the findings. The use of multiple data sources is consistent with the principle of triangulation, which enhances the credibility of qualitative research (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 2015). GPA data were obtained through official academic records with the consent of the participants.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process began with the distribution of questionnaires using Google Form, which was shared with both participant groups via WhatsApp. After collecting all responses, the researcher matched the results with each student's GPA data. This combination of perceptual and academic performance data provided a comprehensive picture of students' experiences and outcomes in online and offline learning.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis developed by Miles and Huberman (1984). This model involves three concurrent steps:

- a. Data Reduction – simplifying, organizing, and categorizing the data.
- b. Data Display – presenting the data in the form of tables and figures to facilitate interpretation.
- c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – interpreting the findings to generate meaning and ensure their validity.

Through this systematic process, the study sought to interpret students' perceptions of English speaking learning in online and offline settings while validating these perceptions against objective academic performance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students' Perceptions in Online Learning

The findings reveal that students from the online learning group (class of 2021) expressed mixed perceptions of their English speaking development. Positive experiences were reported particularly in the areas of pronunciation and fluency, where 100% and 80% of the students, respectively, acknowledged improvements. These outcomes may be attributed to the flexibility of online platforms, which provided students with opportunities to replay learning materials, practice independently, and control the pace of their

learning. Such flexibility allowed learners to engage in self-directed practice, an essential element in language acquisition that supports learner autonomy (Little et al., 2003).

Despite these strengths, students also encountered considerable challenges in confidence (60%) and engagement (50%). Many participants indicated that the absence of face-to-face interaction limited their chances to actively communicate with peers and lecturers, which in turn affected their motivation and sense of involvement. While some students appreciated the convenience of learning from home, only 40% perceived online learning as the most effective mode for improving their speaking skills. These findings suggest that although online learning fosters individual control over language practice, it may not adequately address the affective dimensions of speaking, such as reducing anxiety and building self-confidence.

3.2 Students' Perceptions in Offline Learning

In contrast, students from the offline learning group (class of 2022) demonstrated consistently strong positive perceptions across nearly all components of speaking skills. A majority (88.8%) agreed that offline classes significantly improved their fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. The classroom setting provided a socially interactive environment where students benefited from immediate feedback, spontaneous communication, and collaborative learning activities. These conditions were conducive to fostering both linguistic competence and communicative confidence (Harmer, 2007).

Moreover, engagement levels in offline classes were markedly higher compared to online classes. Students reported that the presence of peers and instructors created a supportive atmosphere that motivated them to participate more actively. Although some students continued to experience speaking anxiety, particularly when presenting in front of others, the majority (88.8%) regarded offline learning as the most effective method for developing speaking skills. This illustrates the importance of social presence and real-time interaction in language learning environments.

3.3 Academic Performance Comparison

When comparing the Grade Point Average (GPA) results between the two groups, an interesting pattern emerged. The online learning group achieved a slightly higher average GPA (3.34) than the offline learning group (3.31). At first glance, this suggests that students engaged in online learning performed equally well, if not marginally better, in terms of measurable academic outcomes. This result may reflect the structured nature of online assessments, where students had access to digital resources, could review materials multiple times, and completed assignments at their own pace. Such flexibility can enhance task performance, particularly for students who are self-disciplined and capable of managing their learning independently.

However, this higher GPA does not necessarily translate into stronger perceptions of speaking skill development. As the findings revealed, students in the online cohort expressed lower levels of confidence and engagement, and only a minority believed that online learning was the most effective means of improving speaking abilities. This contrast highlights an important distinction: academic scores capture cognitive mastery, but they often fail to measure affective dimensions of learning, such as motivation, confidence, and communicative competence. In line with Dörnyei's (2005) perspective, language learning success should be viewed as a multidimensional construct that encompasses not only knowledge and performance but also emotional and social engagement.

The discrepancy between GPA outcomes and students' subjective experiences suggests that quantitative measures alone are insufficient to evaluate language learning effectiveness. While GPA remains a valuable indicator of academic achievement, it must be interpreted alongside qualitative dimensions, including students' perceptions, attitudes, and levels of classroom participation. This finding aligns with broader research in applied linguistics, which emphasizes that affective and social factors play an equally critical role as cognitive abilities in shaping language development (Krashen, 1982; Oxford, 2016). Therefore, educators and institutions should not rely solely on GPA as the primary benchmark of success but instead adopt a more holistic assessment approach that considers both academic performance and learners' affective growth.

3.4 Online Learning and Learner Autonomy

The findings from the online cohort resonate with the notion that online learning environments tend to foster learner autonomy. Students appreciated the flexibility to repeatedly access recorded lectures, digital resources, and online exercises, which enabled them to practice at their own pace. This condition supports the principles of self-regulated learning, where learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning strategies independently (Zimmerman, 2002). In the context of speaking skills, this flexibility provided opportunities for students to rehearse pronunciation, revisit vocabulary, and refine grammar without the immediate pressure of classroom interaction. For some learners, such conditions created a safer and more controlled environment to build foundational speaking competence.

Nevertheless, autonomy in online learning has its limitations, particularly regarding the absence of real-time interaction. While students could engage with materials independently, they reported lower levels

of confidence and engagement, suggesting that autonomy alone cannot replace the motivational and affective benefits of social learning. This finding aligns with Garrison's (2011) Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, which highlights the need for a balance of cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence in online education. Without sufficient interaction and feedback, students may feel disconnected from the learning community, which can negatively impact their willingness to actively use the target language in authentic communication.

3.5 Offline Learning and Sociocultural Interaction

The consistently positive perceptions from the offline learning group can be explained through Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which emphasizes that learning is fundamentally a social process. In face-to-face classrooms, students interact directly with peers and instructors, benefiting from scaffolding provided by more competent speakers. Such interactions stimulate the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners are supported to perform tasks slightly beyond their independent capabilities. This environment fosters deeper internalization of language skills because students not only receive immediate corrective feedback but also observe and model communicative behaviors from others.

In addition, the offline classroom setting provides a sense of immediacy and authenticity that is difficult to replicate online. Opportunities for spontaneous dialogue, role-playing, and group discussions promote not only fluency and accuracy but also confidence and communicative competence. Students in this study highlighted how real-time responses from lecturers and peers boosted their motivation and engagement, reinforcing the idea that social interaction is indispensable for effective speaking development. These findings align with prior studies in applied linguistics, which demonstrate that learners acquire language more effectively when immersed in environments rich in social support, feedback, and collaborative tasks (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

3.6 The Paradox of GPA and Perceived Learning

The slight GPA advantage of the online group, compared to the offline group, highlights a critical paradox: academic scores do not always mirror learning satisfaction or perceived progress. This finding suggests that while online learning may support efficient completion of tasks and assessments, it does not necessarily translate into higher levels of confidence or engagement in speaking practice. This reinforces the argument that language learning is not solely a cognitive process but also an affective and social one (Krashen, 1982; Dörnyei, 2005).

3.7 Towards Blended Learning Approaches

Overall, the findings indicate that both learning modes possess unique advantages and drawbacks. Online learning supports autonomy, flexibility, and access to resources, while offline learning provides richer social interaction, immediate feedback, and stronger engagement. These results support the implementation of blended learning models, which integrate the strengths of both modalities (Graham, 2013). By combining online flexibility with offline interactivity, educators can create more holistic language learning environments that cater to both cognitive and affective aspects of speaking development.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of English speaking learning in online and offline classes within the Intensive Course program at Gorontalo State University. It specifically examined how students evaluated their speaking skill development—covering components such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, and engagement—in relation to the learning modality they experienced. The research also included GPA data as supporting documentation to complement and validate the perception findings.

The results showed that students who participated in offline learning generally held more positive perceptions regarding their speaking skill development. They reported greater improvements in all components of speaking, particularly in fluency, interaction, and engagement, which are closely tied to social communication and real-time feedback. These students also expressed a stronger belief that offline learning was the most effective mode for enhancing their speaking abilities.

In contrast, students in the online learning group showed mixed perceptions. They acknowledged benefits in aspects such as pronunciation and fluency, likely due to the flexibility and availability of digital materials. However, their perceptions were less positive in components that required live interaction, such as confidence, engagement, and peer communication. Fewer students considered online learning to be the most effective method for developing speaking skills.

The comparison of academic records (GPA) between both groups indicated a minimal difference in performance, with the online group averaging a GPA of 3.34 and the offline group 3.31. This suggests that academic achievement, as measured through grades, may not fully reflect the students' qualitative learning experiences or skill development in speaking.

In conclusion, students' perceptions differed based on the mode of learning they experienced. Offline learning was generally perceived as more supportive of speaking skill development due to the availability of direct interaction, immediate feedback, and structured classroom engagement. Online learning, while beneficial in certain areas, was perceived as less effective for developing communicative and interpersonal aspects of speaking.

4.2 Suggestions/Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, several suggestions are proposed for different stakeholders.

For students, it is important to actively recognize their own learning needs and learning styles in both online and offline environments. They are encouraged to take initiative in developing their speaking skills by practicing consistently, participating in class discussions, utilizing digital resources, and seeking feedback from peers or instructors. By maintaining motivation and engagement across different learning modalities, students will be able to enhance their overall language development more effectively.

For lecturers, varied and flexible teaching strategies are highly recommended to accommodate both online and offline learning contexts. In offline classes, lecturers should maximize opportunities for real-time interaction, collaborative activities, and performance-based tasks that foster students' confidence and speaking fluency. In online classes, interactive tools and asynchronous content—such as pronunciation videos, discussion forums, and voice-based assignments—can be effectively employed to promote student participation. Above all, consistent feedback and encouragement are essential to support students' continuous progress in speaking.

For institutions, adopting blended learning models is strongly recommended as they can integrate the strengths of both online and offline teaching. Curriculum planners should ensure that face-to-face activities emphasize interaction and communicative competence, while digital platforms can be utilized to strengthen technical aspects such as pronunciation and vocabulary. Furthermore, institutions must invest in professional development programs for lecturers and provide adequate digital infrastructure to ensure effective teaching and learning processes.

Finally, for future researchers, it is important to acknowledge that this study was limited to a relatively small sample of Intensive Course students at Gorontalo State University. Future studies could expand the scope by including larger samples, involving students from other faculties or institutions, and employing mixed-method approaches to gain more comprehensive insights. Further research could also investigate the longitudinal development of students' speaking performance across different learning modalities and explore how individual differences—such as personality traits or language anxiety—affect the acquisition of speaking skills in both online and offline contexts.

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