






Enhancing Sport Education Students' Speaking Performance through Assigned Topics in STOK Binaguna Medan

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ABSTRACT

Speaking proficiency is an essential skill for students in sports education, as their future professional roles require the capacity to clarify sports regulations, deliver coaching directives, motivate athletes, outline training programs, and communicate effectively in academic or professional settings. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, speaking poses considerable obstacles as learners must simultaneously manage vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and confidence (Burns, 2019; Yu et al., 2024). Indonesian EFL learners often face speaking difficulties stemming from limited vocabulary, inadequate fluency, pronunciation concerns, reduced confidence, and speaking anxiety (Marlia et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2023). This study aims to examine the influence of designated subjects on the speaking performance of sports education students at STOK Binaguna Medan. The study utilized a quasi-experimental approach that included a pre-test and post-test control group. Forty students were assigned to an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction in speaking on specific sport-related topics, while the control group participated in conventional speaking coaching. The speaking examination was assessed based on fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. The findings indicate that the experimental group showed superior advancement compared to the control group. Students who interacted with designated topics demonstrated greater conceptual organization, enriched vocabulary, heightened confidence, and higher speaking fluency. The study demonstrates that designated subjects effectively improve speaking performance in sports education by providing preparation time, contextual relevance, frequent practice, and structured speaking opportunities.

Keywords: Assigned Topics, Speaking Performance, Sport Education, EFL Learners, English for Specific Purposes



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1. Introduction

English has emerged as a crucial medium of communication in education, technology, commerce, tourism, and athletics. In higher education, English is both studied as a discipline and utilized for accessing academic resources, engaging in international discourse, and enhancing professional skills. For students in sports education, English holds particular significance due to the growing interconnection of sports through international contests, coaching programs, sports conferences, online training resources, and global sports communities. Individuals pursuing a degree in sports education may subsequently assume roles as physical education educators, coaches, trainers, referees, sports administrators, fitness instructors, or sports entrepreneurs. In these positions, they may be required to elucidate sports regulations, delineate exercise methodologies, provide coaching directives, interact with athletes, and articulate training regimens in English (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024).

At STOK Binaguna Medan, students receive training in sports science, physical education, coaching methodologies, motor skills, and practical sports activities. Despite their primary field of study not being

English, proficiency in spoken English remains a crucial ancillary ability. Students may require English to comprehend international sports terminology, monitor global sports developments, and engage in wider academic or professional contexts. Consequently, English instruction for sports education students should emphasize not only grammar and reading comprehension but also oral communication skills pertinent to their discipline.

Speaking is frequently seen as one of the most challenging competencies for EFL learners. In contrast to writing, speaking necessitates the instantaneous generation of language. Students must choose the right words, use correct grammar, speak clearly, keep their fluency, understand the material, and control their anxiety all at the same time (Burns, 2019; Yu et al., 2024). Students may understand English grammar when they read it, but they may still have trouble speaking it spontaneously (Fauzi & Asi, 2023; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). They may often pause, forget words, say them wrong, or not speak at all because they are afraid of making mistakes. Most people in Indonesia learn English as a second language. This shows that kids don't get to hear English very often outside of school. Many students study English for years but rarely use it to talk to people in real life. As a result, they may be passive in speaking classes and depend on rote language (Hossain, 2024). Previous studies have shown that Indonesian EFL learners often deal with anxiety when speaking, low self-esteem, and a limited vocabulary, which could hurt their speaking skills (Marlia et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2023).

Students pursuing sports education may also have these issues because they rarely use English in sports conversations. Teaching English to sports education students requires consideration of their unique needs. Many people know about sports, teamwork, coaching, and athletic activities. They may struggle with English sports language. Kids may know how to warm up, stretch, pass, shoot, and cool down, but not in English. They may know what a coach does, but explaining what they should do may be difficult. To help students integrate their prior knowledge into English communication, verbal training must be linked to sport-related content (Nugroho et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2025). EFL speaking courses often cover broad themes that are unrelated to the students' studies (Mingyan et al., 2025). Family, interests, daily routines, and favorite cuisines might assist people learn English (González Reséndez, 2024). Yet, sports education students need classes that shape their academic and professional identities. Sports nutrition, injury prevention, teamwork, fitness, coaching communication, fair play, sports leadership, and training methods matter more. Instead of learning new topics, students may focus on speaking English when discussing what they already know. This may boost involvement and lessen speaking anxiety (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024).

Structured, prepared, and relevant education is needed to meet these issues. Possible method: employ certain subjects. Students are given themes to discuss before their speaking assignments. Students can brainstorm, discover new words, outline, practice pronunciation, and plan their speech. The selected topic method works for individual presentations, paired conversations, group discussions, brief speeches, role-playing, and Q&A sessions. This basic but vital method helps pupils go from passive to active speaking. Designated subjects are related to task-based learning (Prasodjo, 2023). Task-based language instruction emphasises fundamental communication and language usage tasks (East, 2021; Ellis, 2018; Yu et al., 2024). Topic-based learning helps pupils learn new words and concepts by following a theme. Student learning is more authentic and meaningful when disciplines tie to their studies (Syaripuddin, 2022).

This study stands out due to the substantial research on speaking strategies, despite the few studies on sport education students. Sports students need English for sports and professional communication, unlike English students. Nugroho et al. (2022) observed that sports students had trouble communicating in class due to language, mental, and topic issues. Thus, this study explores how assigned topic improve sport education students' speaking skills at STOK Binaguna Medan. The main research question of this study is: **Does the use of assigned topics significantly improve sport education students' speaking performance at STOK Binaguna Medan?** The objective of this study is to determine the effectiveness of assigned topics in improving the speaking performance of sport education students at STOK Binaguna Medan, particularly in terms of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, and confidence.

2. Method

This research employed a quasi-experimental design featuring both pre-test and post-test control groups. A quasi-experimental design was chosen due to the use of existing classes, which precluded the complete random assignment of individual students. The design comprised two groups: an experimental group instructed via designated topics and a control group educated through traditional speaking methods. This design is suitable for classroom-based research as it enables researchers to evaluate student progress pre- and post-treatment while preserving the authentic classroom environment (East, 2021; Ellis, 2018).

Table 1. Progress Pre-test and Post-test

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	Speaking Test	Assigned Topic Strategy	Speaking Test
Control Group	Speaking Test	Conventional Speaking Method	Speaking Test

2.1 Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at STOK Binaguna Medan. There were 40 kids in the sports education program who were also taking an English class. They were chosen based on how much speaking practice they needed for their school and work lives. There were two groups of students: 20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group. The pre-test results showed that both groups had similar levels of English speaking ability.

2.2 Research Variables

The independent variable of this study was the assigned topic strategy. The dependent variable was students' speaking performance. Speaking performance was measured through five indicators: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. These elements are frequently included in speaking evaluations as they signify both linguistic precision and communicative competence (Burns, 2019; Yu et al., 2024).

2.3 Treatment Procedure

The treatment was administered during multiple sessions. The instructor presented the designated topic strategy and elucidated the speaking assessment criteria to the experimental group. Students were assigned sports-related themes prior to each speaking engagement. They were obligated to compile essential vocabulary, principal concepts, illustrations, and concise elucidations. Students presented or debated the issue individually, in pairs, or in small groups during the lesson. This technique embodies topic-based and task-based learning, wherein students utilize language to accomplish significant oral communication tasks (East, 2021; Hibatulloh et al., 2024).

The designated subjects encompassed: the significance of warming up prior to exercise, coaching directives in football or volleyball, nutritious diets for athletes, collaboration in athletic performance, injury prevention in sports, attributes of an effective coach, sports ethics and fair play, strategies for motivating young athletes, physical fitness and daily exercise, and the function of referees in sports competitions. Each meeting adhered to a series of steps. The instructor commenced by presenting the topic and supplying essential jargon. Secondly, pupils developed their concepts either independently or in collaboration. Third, students engaged in speaking exercises in pairs or groups. Fourth, students executed the speaking task before the class. The professor provided input on fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and topic arrangement. Feedback is crucial as the growth of speaking skills necessitates continual practice and constructive criticism (Burns, 2019; Wijaya, 2023). In the control group, students acquired speaking skills using traditional activities, including reading dialogues, responding to questions, and engaging in brief conversations using general English resources. The topics were not explicitly designated beforehand and did not consistently pertain to sports education.

2.4 Research Instrument

The main instrument was a speaking test. Students were asked to speak on a selected topic for three to five minutes. Their performance was assessed using a speaking rubric. The rubric consisted of five aspects: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. Each aspect was scored from 1 to 20, so the maximum score was 100.

Table 2. Rubric of five aspect

Aspect	Indicator	Maximum Score
Fluency	Smoothness, hesitation, continuity of speech	20
Vocabulary	Word choice, sport-related terms, lexical range	20

Aspect	Indicator	Maximum Score
Pronunciation	Clarity, stress, intonation	20
Grammar	Sentence structure and accuracy	20
Comprehension	Relevance, understanding, response quality	20
Total		100

To support content validity, the speaking topics and rubric were designed based on the objectives of the English course and the needs of sport education students. The topics were related to students' field of study, while the rubric covered common speaking components. To support scoring reliability, the speaking test should ideally be assessed by two raters. Each rater gives scores based on the rubric, and the final score is calculated by averaging the two scores.

2.5 Data Collection and Analysis

We used pre-tests and post-tests to collect data. The pre-test was given before the treatment to see how well the students could speak at the beginning. After the pre-test, the experimental group received therapy on the topic they were assigned, while the control group received traditional speaking coaching. The post-test was given after the treatment to see if there was any improvement.

The data was analyzed in terms of numbers. We figured out the average scores for the pre-test and post-test. We looked at how much each group's improvement was different. A paired sample t-test was utilized to evaluate the significant difference between pre-test and post-test outcomes within each group. A fourth independent sample t-test was performed to evaluate the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. The alpha level was set at 0.05.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

The results showed that both groups improved after the teaching process, but the improvement of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. The experimental group, which received the assigned topic strategy, showed a substantial increase in speaking performance.

Table 3. The Result

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental Group	20	65.40	82.70	17.30
Control Group	20	66.10	72.30	6.20

The table indicates that the experimental group enhanced by 17.30 points, whilst the control group increased by 6.20 points. This suggests that designated subjects enhanced speaking performance significantly. The disparity between the groups indicates that students assigned organized, sport-related speaking themes had enhanced opportunity for preparation and good performance.

The improvement can also be seen in each speaking component.

Table 4. Speaking Component

Speaking Aspect	Experimental Pre-test	Experimental Post-test	Control Pre-test	Control Post-test
Fluency	13.00	17.10	13.20	14.50
Vocabulary	12.80	16.80	13.10	14.60
Pronunciation	13.10	16.20	13.00	14.30
Grammar	12.90	15.90	13.20	14.20
Comprehension	13.60	16.70	13.60	14.70

Speaking Aspect	Experimental Pre-test	Experimental Post-test	Control Pre-test	Control Post-test
Total	65.40	82.70	66.10	72.30

The most significant enhancement in the experimental group was observed in fluency and vocabulary. This indicates that students enhanced their fluency due to the opportunity to organize their thoughts prior to speaking. They employed a greater quantity of sport-related terminology as the designated topics prompted them to seek pertinent expressions. The enhancement in comprehension indicates that students were more adept at linking their ideas to the issue.

The paired sample t-test revealed that the enhancement in the experimental group was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The control group exhibited improvement; however, the increase was less significant. The independent sample t-test indicated that the post-test mean score of the experimental group was considerably greater than that of the control group. Consequently, the designated topic technique can be regarded as effective in enhancing students' speaking skills.

Discussion

The investigation's results show that the themes used in athletic education helped students get better at speaking. The improvement came from the chosen themes, which provided structure, time to prepare, and relevance to the field. Students were told to come up with a topic based on what they knew instead of just talking about anything. This made the speaking exercise more important. This finding is in line with task-based language instruction theory, which says that students get better at using language when they use it to do important communicative tasks (East, 2021; Ellis, 2018; Yu et al., 2024).

The assigned themes helped the students speak more fluently at first. Before the intervention, a lot of kids couldn't talk and would often stop, repeat sentences, or just stop talking. Students' fluency improved because they had to prepare supporting information and key themes for several meetings. They could talk to each other in a more organized way. They were able to speak more smoothly and keep their rhythm because they had practiced. This backs up what Burns (2019) said about how important it is to have chances to prepare, practice, and perform in order to improve speaking.

Second, the topics that were given to the students helped them learn new words. Students who want to learn about sports need to know words about training, coaching, fitness, rules, equipment, injuries, and working together. Through their assigned readings, students were motivated to learn and use sports-related words. For instance, when students talked about "muscle strain," "ankle sprain," "recovery," "safety equipment," and "first aid," they learned words that are related to "preventing sports injuries." As part of "coaching instructions," the students were told to stay balanced, pass the ball, speed up, control their breathing, and hold their position. These terms are directly related to the areas where they are used. This finding aligns with ESP research indicating that students engaged in sports and physical education require English resources pertinent to their academic and professional fields (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025).

Third, the required subjects were spoken more clearly. Students could ask questions about how to say hard words during practice and preparation in the classroom. They got better at saying sports words because they heard them often. The results showed that things were getting better, even though the improvement in vocabulary and fluency was bigger than the improvement in pronunciation. This discovery corroborates the notion that repetitive speaking practice can enhance oral precision and comprehensibility (Burns, 2019; Yu et al., 2024).

Fourth, the themes made the students feel more sure of themselves. Students often get anxious about speaking when they don't know what to say. Giving students topics to talk about helped to solve this problem by letting them get ready before they spoke. They were more sure of themselves because they had already practiced the words and understood the topic. This is in line with other research that has shown that Indonesian EFL learners often have trouble speaking. Nonetheless, preparation and supportive pedagogical strategies can mitigate anxiety (Marlia et al., 2023; Rozaq et al., 2022; Wijaya, 2023).

Fifth, the assigned themes encouraged learning that was centered on the students. Students were not only interested in what they were watching, but they also spoke up. They did research, made outlines, practiced with their classmates, and gave a speech. This helped people become more independent and responsible. The speaker helped by giving suggestions, encouragement, vocabulary support, and comments. Hibatulloh et al. (2024) and Syaripuddin (2022) say that this way of learning is in line with task-based and topic-based learning, which encourages students to have meaningful conversations.

The results are also relevant to English for Specific Purposes. Sport education students need to learn English that is useful for their future jobs. Using sports-related topics makes learning how to speak more useful.

Students can see how English is useful for their jobs as teachers, instructors, athletes, referees, or athletes. Students perceive English as advantageous to their fields, thereby enhancing motivation (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025).

The experimental group exhibited greater improvement due to traditional speaking education lacking the same level of contextual relevance and preparation as the control group. The control group of students did speaking exercises, but they weren't as directly related to sports instruction and were more general. After that, they saw some growth. This indicates that traditional training should incorporate more structured and significant tasks, rather than being deemed ineffective (Hibatulloh et al., 2024; Syaripuddin, 2022).

Another important thing is the role of feedback. After their speeches, the students in the experimental group got feedback. With the help of feedback, they were able to see where they could improve and do better in the future. For instance, students who talked too fast were told to slow down. Students who didn't have a good vocabulary were told to come up with important phrases. Students who had trouble saying words were told to say hard phrases over and over. This feedback loop made the chosen topic strategy work better. Feedback is very important in speaking lessons because it helps students figure out what they are good at and what they need to work on (Burns, 2019).

It was also hard to put the suggested themes into action. At first, some students tried to memorize long paragraphs by copying them from the internet. Because of this, their speech didn't flow naturally anymore. The lecturer told the students to use outlines instead of full stories to solve this problem. Students were told to only write down the main ideas and keywords. It was also hard that not everyone was equally involved in group activities. The few outgoing students who talked the most were the only ones who the shy students could rely on. To solve this problem, the teacher gave each student a specific job, like speaker, vocabulary finder, questioner, or summarizer. Students who are not yet used to actively participating in speaking activities are especially likely to have these problems in the classroom, especially when they are doing communicative and task-based speaking activities (Hibatulloh et al., 2024; Wijaya, 2023).

4. Conclusion

The findings of the investigation have significant educational implications. First and foremost, English teachers in sports education programs should come up with speaking topics that are relevant to their students' fields of study. The subjects should be thorough and also have to do with health, fitness, sports, coaching, and physical education. Because of this, teachers should give students enough time to get ready for their presentations. Students should not memorize whole scripts. Instead, they should make outlines, learn key phrases, come up with examples, and think of questions. Third, teachers should help students with their vocabulary before they contribute. Fourth, because each activity builds different communication skills, teachers should include speaking exercises for individuals, pairs, and groups in their lessons. Fifth, teachers need to give students feedback that is helpful and points out both their strengths and weaknesses.

Last but not least, the investigation's findings indicate that the assigned topic method markedly enhances the speaking skills of students in STOK Binaguna Medan's athletic education program. The experimental group did better than the control group when it came to fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and understanding. Vocabulary and fluency got the most better because students got to learn sports-related language and concepts before they spoke.

Students who are given themes can speak more confidently because they are less nervous and unsure of themselves. Students get more ready, organized, and motivated. Also, sports-related classes make English lessons more useful for students' school and work needs. So, using set topics to teach speaking in sports education programs works very well.

It is suggested that teachers make speaking topics that are relevant to what their students are studying. Some possible topics for sports education are coaching rules, nutrition for athletes, preventing injuries, working together as a team, playing fair, getting fit, being a leader in sports, sports ethics, and getting ready for competition. Lecturers should also help students interact with each other, learn new words, practice their pronunciation, and give each other helpful feedback.

There are a number of problems with this investigation. At first, only forty students could join. After that, the treatment was given in a short amount of time. Third, the study only looked at students' quantitative speaking scores and didn't fully look at their opinions. Future researchers should conduct analogous studies with larger samples, extended treatment durations, and more comprehensive statistical analyses. Further research could investigate students' viewpoints on assigned subjects, juxtapose these subjects with project-based learning, or integrate assigned subjects with digital media, such as podcasts, online presentations, and video blogs.

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