



Students' Perceptions of Online Learning Experiences for ESL Speaking Activities

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ABSTRACT

Performing speaking tasks via online learning can be challenging for first-year university students. This quantitative study explored the students' perceptions of online learning experiences, challenges, and strategies in implementing English speaking activities. 127 out of 315 students responded to the questionnaire, which involved asking for information on students' backgrounds, perceptions of online platforms, online learning adoption and difficulties in implementing speaking tasks via online learning. The findings reveal that while most students have positive perceptions of online learning platforms for English-speaking tasks, a small percentage of them still prefer physical classroom learning. Nevertheless, lecturers' strategies of prompting for ideas, asking questions, and exploring creative ideas for speaking activities have successfully met the students' online learning needs.

Keywords: speaking skills, online distance learning, online learning strategies, online learning challenges

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1 INTRODUCTION

Participating in speaking activities is essential for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. However, performing speaking tasks via online distance learning (ODL) can be challenging for first-year university students at Malaysian universities such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) because they are non-native speakers of English. Although they have studied the English language for 11 years in Malaysian primary and secondary schools, the closure of university physical classrooms and the new norms of online learning has impacted the learning experiences of this cohort of first-year students. The global COVID-19 pandemic declared in March 2020 has contributed to the rise of online learning that requires students to adopt and adapt to online distance learning and studying from remote locations.

Consistent with the Ministry of Higher Education circular, all higher education institutions in Malaysia suspended physical education and required all students to study while remaining safe at home (Adams et al., 2020). The intensity of the pandemic since March 2020 has triggered university students to be independent online learners. For instance, video conferencing platforms are heavily used to meet the demand for online learning, such as Google Meet, Zoom, Skype and WebEx, as well as Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Padlet, Moodle and social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube. Since online learning provides a great deal of flexibility in terms of time and location, Dhawan (2020) argues that the role of the internet in the learning process is vital to students. Students not only need working internet connections but also digital devices such as computers and hand-phones and optional accessories such as headphones, speakers, and printers. With the emergence of ODL, ESL learners have encountered considerable challenges in acquiring and improving their English language skills (Ariyanti, 2020). According to Chung et al. (2020), the decision to close all institutions and eliminate face-to-face classrooms has put learners in a survival mode and forced them to adjust to the "new normal." Mohd Sharidan Shaari and Wan Sallha Yusuf (2021) also agreed that university students become more stressed when studying online.

Although studies related to online learning because of COVID-19 are mushrooming, this study is essential to depict students' perceptions of online learning experiences related to speaking activities for English Language Course (ELC) 151, an intermediate ESL course for UiTM students. To illustrate, most of the studies discussed in the following sections pertain to students' perceptions of e-learning (see Cakrawati, 2017; Mosatova & Vyskrabkova, 2019; Al Saleem, 2018; Tseng & Yeh, 2019; Koroglu & Cakir, 2017; Herrera & Gonzalez, 2017) were not conducted with ESL undergraduate students, as far as the context of ESL in the Malaysian education system is concerned. Moreover, the challenges of e-learning and strategies employed to increase students' participants in online learning, as identified in most studies, were not focusing on the English-speaking subject but rather encompassing online learning subjects as a whole (see Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Tukiman et al., 2020; Idris, 2020; Hong et al., 2018). Therefore, this highlights a lack of knowledge on the perceptions of undergraduate students on the use of online learning in English speaking subjects, the challenges they face, and the strategies employed to increase their participants in e-learning. Considering the knowledge gap in the literature, this study was conducted with the following objectives: 1) to investigate the perceptions of students toward

speaking tasks via online learning, 2) to investigate the difficulties faced by the students in implementing speaking tasks via online learning, and 3) to investigate the strategies employed by the class lecturers to increase students' participation in speaking tasks and activities via online learning.

1.1 Students' perceptions of online learning

Some students believe that online learning platforms are interactive, user friendly and save their time and effort (Cakrawati, 2017), can motivate and foster self-directed learning (Mosatova & Vyskrabkova, 2019; Al Saleem, 2018), and can improve speaking skills (Tseng & Yeh, 2019; Koroglu & Cakır, 2017; Herrera & Gonzalez, 2017) in terms of grammar rules and pronunciation, fluency, coherence, and accuracy. On the other hand, other studies (Perveen, 2016; Dhawan, 2020) discovered some online learning restrictions that can have drawbacks to the teaching and development of speaking skills due to a lack of personal and/or physical attention in the e-learning environment. Hence, online speaking activities are deemed to be not as effective as actual class interactions in conventional classrooms (Mardiah, 2020).

However, the use of the 5E (Engage Explore, Explain, Extend, Evaluate) Instructional Model by Garderen et al. (2020) requires active learners' participation in online learning provides a systematic and exploratory method for students to learn and encourage reflective thinking. Additionally, Martin (2019) proposed five key considerations for supporting e-learning to include 1) short and orderly instruction, 2) appropriate content for students' level of knowledge and skills, 3) regular monitoring of students' motivation, energy, and effort, especially in self-regulated e-learning, 4) group discussions and connective interaction in e-learning, as well as, 5) priority for the mental health of students and educators. For online learning to be perceived favourably, a positive learning environment must be the essence, including for speaking activities in ESL virtual classrooms

1.2 Online learning challenges

Online learning requires a fast, reliable, and stable internet connection. However, poor internet speed and connectivity is one of the biggest challenges faced by students during online learning (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Tukiman et al., 2020), especially for students from rural areas in Sabah, Sarawak, and remote areas in Peninsular Malaysia. They are deprived of access to a high-speed internet connection (Idris, 2020; Hong et al., 2018). The preference for face-to-face learning (Marion et al., 2020) and traditional text materials (Orton-Johnson, 2009) could also be one of the e-learning challenges. Although educators engage ESL learners in interesting and enjoyable activities that encourage them to speak in class, it is rather difficult to do so in the online mode because not all learners are comfortable with online learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020) and it is difficult for educators to get feedback from passive learners (Kaur, 2020).

Students who encounter problems during online learning are said to be passive and lack effective contact with educators (Ariyanti, 2020). According to Sayuti et al. (2020), speaking tasks could lead to students' lack of confidence. Communication through virtual lessons has made it even more

difficult for them to speak or utter the words appropriately. One of the reasons is they lack vocabulary and practice to speak English fluently (Syafiq et al., 2021). Hernandez & Florez (2020) emphasized that in speaking classes, peer connection is insufficient for students to practice their skills. Sison & Bautista (2021) stressed that psychological factors influence students' participation, and they become unmotivated to learn in such situations (Toquero, 2020). Meinawati et al. (2020) indicated that students become anxious when they are deprived of language content during online speaking engagements. This has led the students to have trouble expressing their thoughts verbally during online speaking classes.

However, a moderate level of online learning readiness (Adams et al., 2019) can be addressed by stressing the importance of students' awareness of technology in e-learning and the availability of technological sources. Since 90% of UITM university students are reported to own mobile devices and have the technological skills to use them (Murugan, 2017), some elements of the mobile learning framework, such as the employment of online mobile pedagogy for ESL students (Hulme et al., 2015) can be suggested. An example of online learning arrangements is take-home and open-book tasks (Mustafa, 2020). Hence, students' level of online learning readiness could be increased with more awareness of technological aspects.

1.3 Strategies used to increase students' participation

Using appropriate language learning strategies can increase language skills positively. Roleplay, storytelling, interviews, creative tasks, and drilling to improve students' speaking skills are some strategies used by previous researchers (Anjaniputra, 2013; Robert & Pane, 2020). Employing strategies can make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. A range of functions-based activities (Hussain, 2018) that can be utilized to build speaking skills includes e-dialogue, which is an online classroom technique used for practising functions of language like greeting, agreeing, disagreeing, apologizing, suggesting, and asking for information.

Another adaptable e-speaking learning technique is e-role play, a popular online technique used to practice speaking skills virtually. Students are required to give opinions or ideas. To illustrate, students are asked to express their opinions about a topic that is being discussed. This discussion is normally carried out using online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet or Webex. This strategy is good in increasing students' participation and engagement in e-learning. The students will feel motivated and are always encouraged to speak their minds. They also received positive feedback and participation from other learners. Active learning opportunities, such as participating in collaborative group work, having students facilitate presentations and discussions, actively sharing resources, creating course assignments with hands-on components, and incorporating case studies and reflections, are all part of e-speaking engagement strategies.

2 METHOD OF THE STUDY

2.1. Research design

The primary goal of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of online learning

experiences for ESL speaking activities. This quantitative research utilized a questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was developed by adapting established questionnaires from the literature (see subsection 2.3). A pilot test was conducted to ensure the validity of the questionnaire prior to the actual study. The piloting of the instrument showed that the instrument had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). The online questionnaire was designed to include sections on demographic profiles, perceptions of the online platforms, online learning challenges, useful strategies to increase students' participation, as well as open-ended questions for other strategies and challenges for online learning (e.g., Ozden et al., 2004; Cakrawati, 2017; Chu & Chen, 2016).

2.2 Participants

The participants were full-time students enrolled in the ELC151 course at UiTM Samarahan Campus 1 and 2 for the April-July 2021 session. The sampling pool fulfilled these conditions: (1) the course included e-learning activities for more than ten weeks; (2) the course applied asynchronous e-learning; and (3) the course used the same technology platform. The population for ELC151 students at UiTM Sarawak was 1615. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table, the sample size for this study was 315. A purposeful and convenient sampling method was employed. Purposive sampling was used because ELC151 students began their first year during a lockdown when all the courses were conducted as ODL. This study also utilized convenience sampling since the researchers used their own students to collect data.

The questionnaire has 127 valid responses. There were more female (73.6%) than male (26.4%) respondents. A higher percentage (94.5%) of the respondents are from the 19–20- year-old age bracket. The majority (78.7%) of them are from the social science clusters, which are Diploma in Public Administration (AM110), Diploma in Accountancy (AC110), Diploma in Information Management (IM110), Diploma in Sports Studies (SR113), Bachelor of Science (Hons.) Technology and Plantation Management (AT110). Only 21.3% are from the science cluster course, which is the Diploma in Industrial Chemistry (AS115). For their online locations, 69.4% indicated their locations across Sarawak, 28.3% from Malaysian Peninsula and 2.3% from Sabah. While 66.7% indicated urban vicinity as their online locations, 33.3% of the respondents did their ODL from rural locations. For online platforms, 82.7% identified Google Meet as the main platform used, 15.7% for Google Classrooms, Zoom (0.8%) and WhatsApp (0.8%). Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic profiles.

Table 1. Participants' backgrounds, online locations, and common online platforms were used.

Items	Description	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	73.6
	Male	26.4
Age Brackets	17-18	2.4

	19-20	94.5
	21-22	2.4
	23-24	0
	Beyond 25	0.8
Program Code	AC110	39.4
	AM110	18.9
	AT110	0.8
	EC110	0.8
	IM110	2.4
	SR113	1.6
	AS115	21.3
Online locations	Sarawak	69.4
	Malaysian Peninsula	28.3
	Sabah	2.3
Area	Urban	66.7
	Rural	33.3
Online platforms	Google Meet	82.7
	Goggle Classroom	15.7
	WhatsApp	0.8
	Zoom	0.8

2.3 Instrumentation

A questionnaire link using Google Form was distributed to a total of 315 diploma students who had completed 14 weeks of online classes. Nevertheless, only 127 questionnaires were received, with a return rate of 40.32%. This could be due to extraneous variables such as students were not reachable during the questionnaire period. Descriptive analyses were used to describe the students' perceptions and the challenges they experienced in speaking activities, with the latter specifically

analyzing the students' strategies for active participation in speaking tasks via online learning.

The questionnaire was developed from the published items in previous studies and consisted of six sections (e.g., sections A, B, C, D, E, and F). Related questions on demographic, which cover gender, age, program code, online location and area, and online platforms, were included in the first section of the questionnaire (Section A). For the following sections in the questionnaire (Section B, C, D, and E), each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with questions on students' perceptions of the online platforms, students' e-learning adoption, students' online learning challenges and students' strategies to increase online learning participation. The last section (Section F) includes open-ended questions, with questions on other difficulties and strategies employed by lecturers to increase students' online participation in English-speaking tasks. The operational definition and measurement of each construct in the questionnaire are described as follows:

2.3.1 Online platform perceptions

Online platform perceptions were operationally defined as students' perceptions and feedback about the use of online assessment. Ten items were developed by adapting Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli (2004) and Cakrawati (2017).

2.3.2. Online learning adoption

Online learning adoption was operationally defined as user attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and social bonds in correlations to online learning intention. Five items were developed by adapting Chu & Chen (2016).

2.3.3 Online learning challenges

Online learning challenges were operationally defined as the difficulties or issues faced by the students when completing or engaging the English oral activities and tasks via online platforms. Five items were developed based on previous findings in the literature (see subsection 1.2 on online learning challenges).

2.3.4 Useful strategies to increase students' participation

Strategies to increase students' participation were operationally defined as students' approaches to coping with the difficulties which can increase their participation in e-learning. Five items were developed based on previous findings in the literature (see subsection 1.3 on strategies to increase students' participation).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students' perceptions toward speaking tasks via e-learning

Descriptive statistics on every item in this section show that most of the respondents identified

their agreement as "Agree" on the scale (see Table 2). This agreement (e.g., Agree and Strongly Agree) indicates their positive perceptions of the online platforms used by their lecturers to deliver the lessons, tasks, and assignments of the English-speaking component—items 1 to 10 in section B register a high degree of agreement. The findings suggest that the students in the context of this research have positive perceptions of the use of online learning platforms, which corresponds with several studies (e.g., Cakrawati, 2017; Mosatova & Vyskrabkova (2019); Banditvilai (2016); Al Saleem (2018).

The positive perceptions of the students can be attributed to their e-learning adoption. The construct of perceptions is further explored in the following section of e-learning adoption in the questionnaire (see Table 3). A similar pattern (i.e., all items registered with a high percentage of 'agree') was observed in this section in which most respondents indicated their agreement with each item in the section (e.g., item 1 – 83.3%, item 2 – 87.3%, item 3- 62.6%, item 4 – 49.8%). This indicates that the respondents in the context of this study were able to adopt the current teaching method of e-learning employed for the English-speaking component, thus contributing to their positive perception of using the e-learning platforms.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of online platforms.

Item	Section B: Students' perception of the online platforms	1	2	3	4	5
1	Using online platforms for English speaking lessons is a good idea	1.6%	2.4%	20.5%	56.7%	18.9%
2	Using online platforms for speaking tasks is in trend with the current pandemic situation	0.8%	0.8%	13.4%	53.5%	31.5%
3	The use of online platforms for speaking tasks is more systematic.	1.6%	9.4%	31.5%	47.2%	10.2%
4	Interacting using online platforms during English-speaking lessons is helpful.	1.6%	5.5%	30.7%	44.9%	17.3%
5	Conducting the speaking tasks via an online platform is faster than the face-to-face method	3.9%	15.7%	36.2%	30.7%	13.4%
6	Completing the speaking tasks via an online platform is better than the face-to-face method.	3.1%	14.2%	34.6%	38.6%	9.4%
7	I feel positive about using online platforms to perform speaking tasks.	2.4%	4.7%	26.8%	52%	14.2%

8	I feel anxious when doing speaking tasks online.	3.1%	14.2%	33.9%	36.2%	12.6%
9	Using online platforms to complete speaking tasks is consistent with my learning style.	1.6%	7.1%	36.2%	48.8%	6.3%
10	All things considered, using online platforms for English-speaking lessons is beneficial for me.	1.6%	3.1%	31.5%	52.8%	11%

Table 3. Online learning adoption.

Item	Section C: Online Learning adoption	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have the knowledge to use online platforms to complete my speaking tasks.	0%	0.8%	15.7%	63%	20.5%
2	I have the ability to use online platforms in completing my speaking tasks.	0%	2.4%	10.2%	70.1%	17.3%
3	Using online platforms to do the speaking tasks is entirely within my control.	0%	3.9%	33.1%	52%	11%
4	I am able to use online platforms to do speaking tasks without any help.	0.8%	7.1%	42.1%	34.9%	15.1%
5	I have a very limited understanding of using online platforms when doing speaking tasks.	5.5%	28.3%	38.6%	25.2%	2.4%

However, some glaring disagreements are worth highlighting. This can be seen in item 5 in section B of "*Conducting the speaking tasks via an online platform is faster than the face-to-face method*", in which 19.6% (25 respondents) indicate their disagreement. Similarly, about 17.4% (22 respondents) disagree with item 6 in section B of "*completing the speaking tasks via an online platform is better than the face-to-face method*". These two disagreements show that some of the students perceived those English-speaking components are best taught in a physical classroom environment. This finding corresponds with a finding by Mardiah (2020) that e-learning cannot replace the actual classroom interactions in a physical classroom environment.

Furthermore, although almost half of the students did not have anxiety when using the online platforms, 13.5% (17 respondents) of the respondents indicated that they experienced anxiety. Anxiety can be associated with the students' lack of knowledge on using e-learning tools. This can be seen from the responses of 34.2% (37 respondents) to item 5 in section C that they have a limited understanding of using online platforms for doing speaking tasks. This finding confirms

Fawaz and Samaha (2020) that learning via online platforms has given rise to anxiety among undergraduate university students.

3.2 The difficulties faced by the students in implementing speaking tasks via online learning

The next section in the questionnaire prompted students' challenges when doing online speaking tasks and assignments. Five types of difficulties were listed as derived from the literature (see table 4). The first in the list is regarding the internet connection speed. It appears that 74.8% (95 students) of the respondents reported that they faced this difficulty when doing online speaking tasks and assignments, whereas 10.2% did not. Apparently, as compared to other e-learning challenges, slow internet connection is top in the list, with a high percentage of students indicating their agreement on item 1 in Section D. This indicates that the students felt that slow internet speed is one of the challenges in attending speaking activities online. In fact, this difficulty is always associated with e-learning learning as many studies have stressed that e-learning learning requires a fast reliable, and stable internet connection (see Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Tukiman et al., 2020). Moreover, as stated by Idris (2020), some localities in the country are deprived of high-speed internet connection, which can interrupt the e-learning process. This finding adds to the literature that having the speaking component activities delivered through online platforms is dependent on a reliable internet connection.

Next on the list is the difficulty related to students' communication with the lecturers via online platforms. The results indicate that only 29% (37 students) faced this difficulty, whereas 62.9% (80 students) did not. The remaining 8.1% were undecided over this matter. This indicates that most of the students claim that communicating with their lecturers via online platforms is not an issue, as far as a result is concerned. This finding contradicts Mahyoob's study (2020), in which he found that student-teacher communication is the primary difficulty faced by students when doing online learning. The third difficulty listed is regarding students' access to technological resources such as computer software and hardware. The results indicate that most of the students in this study (67.7%) did not have any difficulty in getting access to the technological resources in their area. It was revealed in the results that only a fraction of the students (13.4%) have some restrictions on accessing the resources. The high percentage of this can be associated with the students' current location as many of them (66.7%) are situated in urban areas. Therefore, students' location can affect the success of online learning, providing that the students are situated in urban areas that have convenient access to technological resources.

The fourth item in section D of the questionnaire prompted whether the students feel pressured when completing the speaking tasks and activities via the online platforms. The results revealed that 42.6% of the respondents reported that they did not experience any pressure, whereas the other 27.9% did experience the pressure of completing online tasks. The remaining respondents (29.9%) were undecided over the matter. The results imply that even though the students were identified as able to adapt to technological changes during their study (as seen in their responses to section C), there is however a small percentage of the students who indicated that they experience some forms of pressure when doing online speaking activities and tasks.

This can be attributed to a small number of students who had informed that they prefer to have a face-to-face class environment over online learning in the context of English-speaking components (see item 6 of section B). However, the source of their pressure or anxiety is not determined at this point, but literature may suggest a viable answer. For instance, Meinawati et al. (2020) indicated that students could become anxious when they are deprived of language content during online speaking engagements.

The last item in section D prompted the students regarding their confidence when using the online platforms in completing the speaking activities. The results indicate that 35.4% (45 students) of the respondents in this study have a certain degree of confidence when using online platforms as compared to 29.9% (38 students) of them who did not. Moreover, 34.6% of the respondents were undecided over the matter. Sayuti et al. (2020) asserted that online learning could lead to students' lack of confidence and communication through virtual lessons, which make it more difficult for them to speak or utter words properly. The findings reveal that 29.9% of the students in this study lack confidence when completing online speaking tasks and activities, which can potentially affect their proficiency.

Moreover, these students should be a concern for their class lecturers because their lack of confidence may indicate that they are passive L2students (Kaur & Aziz, 2020). The class lecturers may face a challenging task in engaging these students in an online learning environment despite their creative efforts to encourage the students to speak during class sessions. The respondents were also asked to identify other difficulties that they faced when doing English-speaking tasks online. Their responses were recorded in the open-ended section of the questionnaire. The difficulties include: (1) a non-conducive learning environment at home; (2) irresponsible group members when doing group work; (3) difficulty to communicate with group members; (4) time management; and (5) bad weather affecting the connection and environment.

Table 4. Online learning challenges.

Item	Section D: Online Learning challenges	1	2	3	4	5
1	The internet speed is my concern when doing online speaking tasks.	0.8%	9.4%	15%	36.2%	38.6%
2	Communicating with my lecturer via online platforms are difficult when doing speaking tasks.	5.5%	23.6%	41.7%	23.6%	5.5%
3	The technological sources (e.g., software, hardware) are not readily available in my area.	22%	45.7%	18.9%	11.8%	1.6%
4	I feel pressured when completing speaking tasks via online platforms	8.7%	33.9%	29.9%	21.3%	6.3%
5	I have a lack of confidence when using an online platform.	6.3%	29.1%	34.6%	22.8%	7.1%

3.3 The strategies for improving students' engagement in speaking tasks via online learning

The next objective of the study was to investigate the strategies employed by the class lecturers to increase students' participation in speaking tasks and activities via e-learning platforms. This objective was integrated into section E of the questionnaire, and five strategies were identified as derived from the literature. The strategies include: (1) using e- dialogue; (2) employing e-role play; (3) asking for opinions or ideas; (4) using e-interview; and (5) utilizing e-storytelling. The results indicate that the strategy that is mostly employed by their class lecturers to increase their participation is prompting them for opinions and ideas during e-learning. Table 5 shows that 80.2% (101 students) mentioned that their class lecturers employed this strategy to improve their participation during online learning sessions. This is followed by the following strategies of using e-dialogue, e-role play, and e-storytelling with the percentage of 68.2%, 68.2%, and 66.6%, respectively. The results also show the least strategy employed by their class lecturer to increase their online learning participation, which is using e-interview (59.5%).

Table 5. Strategies to increase online learning participation.

Item	Section E: Strategies to increase online learning participation	1	2	3	4	5
1	Using e-dialogue to increase my participation in online speaking tasks is beneficial to me.	0%	1.6%	30.2%	58.7%	9.5%
2	The use of e-roleplay to increase my participation in online speaking tasks is significant to me.	0%	3.2%	28.6%	60.3%	7.9%
3	Asking for opinions or ideas to increase my participation in online speaking tasks is good for me.	0%	1.6%	18.3%	67.5%	12.7%
4	E-interview can be used to increase my participation in online speaking tasks	0%	3.2%	37.3%	53.2%	6.3%
5	Using e-storytelling to increase my participation in online speaking tasks	0%	4%	29.4%	59.5%	7.1%

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although a high percentage of the respondents agree that they can adapt to the ODL environment, i.e. they have the knowledge to use online platforms to complete the speaking tasks, they also indicate that speaking skill is better taught in a face-to-face environment. This finding is supported by Mardiah (2020), who argued that ODL could not replace actual class interactions as in conventional classrooms. A small percentage indicates that they experienced anxiety. This finding can be explained by Meinawati, Harmoko, Rahmah, & Dewi (2020), who assert that students

become anxious when they are deprived of language content during online speaking engagements. Dhawan (2020) also affirms that the lack of personal or physical attention is a drawback for ODL.

Strategies identified to increase speaking participation include asking for opinions and ideas, allowing for flexibility in the online environment, utilizing games for speaking activities, as well as expanding online resources for speaking tasks. These findings are consistent with Bernard et al. (2009), who encourage student engagement by involving learner-learner, learner-instructor and learner-content. Active learning opportunities, such as participating in collaborative group work, having students facilitate presentations and discussions, actively sharing resources, creating course assignments with hands-on components, and incorporating case studies and reflections, are all part of e-speaking engagement strategies.

Therefore, to encourage active participation in the ODL environment, lecturers need to intentionally explore creative ideas for speaking activities that meet the needs of their students. To promote online student engagement, students and instructors in online courses need to cooperate and collaborate. By promoting cooperation, collaboration, and creative content for speaking skills, online learning classes would be more engaging. However, since this study only focused on ELC 151 students, it could be improved by involving students from other English language courses. It could also be extended to students from other universities. In addition, the study could explore other language skills that are being implemented online, such as writing, listening, and reading.

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