

# Exploring Speaking Skills through the Experience-Based Contextual Hybrid Learning (EXCHIL) Model among English Education Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the EXCHIL Model (Experience-Based Contextual Hybrid Learning) in improving the speaking skills of students in the English Language Education Study Program at Institut Prima Bangsa. Using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design with a descriptive approach, the study involved 52 students. Quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires and pre-test–post-test scores, while qualitative data were collected from observations and in-depth interviews with three students. The main challenges identified were limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and speaking anxiety. Results showed a substantial improvement in students' speaking performance, with the average pre-test score of 66.2 to 82.4 in the post-test. The score distribution also shifted positively, as more students achieved scores in the 75–85 range, while fewer scored below 70. Qualitative findings revealed enhanced fluency, confidence, and willingness to speak after the implementation of the model. These findings suggest that integrating experiential, contextual, and hybrid elements can foster student-centered language learning adaptable to diverse digital environments. Overall, the results highlight the potential of the EXCHIL Model for advancing 21st-century EFL pedagogy.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is one of the primary skills that students in the English Education study program must master. These skills not only relate to linguistic aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and intonation, but also encompass non-linguistic aspects, including confidence, fluency, and the ability to convey ideas coherently and effectively. However, in practice, many students still struggle to develop their speaking skills, primarily due to limited practice opportunities, low motivation, and fewer effective

contextual learning strategies [1]. Additionally, teacher-centered learning makes students less actively involved in the learning process, resulting in their speaking skills not developing optimally [2].

Preliminary data collected from a pre-test involving 52 English education students revealed an average score of 66.2, with 69% of students scoring below 70. This data indicates that most students still possess low speaking skills and require the support of more innovative learning strategies to enhance their performance. As technology advances, hybrid learning has emerged as a highly effective alternative in language learning. This model combines the advantages of face-to-face learning with online-based learning, allowing students to gain broader and more flexible access to learning [3]. Previous research has shown that hybrid learning can increase student participation and engagement in discussions, as well as provide more opportunities for speaking practice through digital media [4].

Meanwhile, the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach has also been proven to bridge students' theoretical understanding with real-world reality, thereby motivating them to use language to communicate [5]. Similarly, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes that learning occurs through concrete experiences and reflective processes, which can make speaking practice more authentic and applicable [6]. While both approaches have demonstrated success, few studies have systematically integrated experiential, contextual, and hybrid components within a single pedagogical framework for EFL speaking instruction.

However, there are some gaps in the literature. First, most previous research has only focused on the application of hybrid learning or CTL separately, without systematically integrating experiential learning components. Second, most research is conducted in the context of secondary schools, whereas in-depth studies at the university level, especially among English Education students, are still limited [7]. Third, many studies emphasize quantitative outcomes, such as increased speech skills, but fewer explore students' experiences, perceptions, and the obstacles they face in the learning process [8]. To address these gaps, this study introduces the EXCHIL model, which integrates experiential, contextual, and hybrid learning into one framework for speaking instruction. A mixed-methods design was employed, where qualitative data were obtained through observations and in-depth interviews with three students to capture their learning experiences, while quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and pre-test–post-test results. This integration allows not only the measurement of learning achievement but also a deeper understanding of students' perceptions and challenges in implementing EXCHIL.

This study introduces the EXCHIL model as a novel approach to speech learning. This model combines three main approaches: experiential learning to provide real-world experiences, contextual learning to relate material to students' life situations, and hybrid learning to leverage technological flexibility. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of these three components into a single learning model, specifically designed to improve the speaking skills of English Education students. In addition, this study not only evaluates the achievement of students' speaking skills, but also explores the experiences, perceptions, and challenges they experience while participating in learning with the EXCHIL model.

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The urgency of this research lies in the effort to present innovative learning models that are relevant to the needs of the 21st century, where oral communication skills in English are essential for competing in both the academic world and the workforce [9]. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution by enriching studies in the field of language pedagogy, especially the development of experiential, contextual, and hybrid learning models. Practically, this research can provide concrete recommendations for lecturers and higher education institutions on designing speech learning that is more effective, interactive, and tailored to the needs of students.

Based on the background, this study aims to explore the implementation of the EXCHIL model in speaking learning for English Education students, and identify students' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of EXCHIL.

## **2. METHOD**

This study employs a convergent parallel mixed-methods design with a descriptive approach. This design enables the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyze them separately, and then integrate the findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the EXCHIL Model (Experience-Based on Contextual Hybrid Learning) influences students' speaking skills. It was chosen to combine statistical validation with rich qualitative insights into students' learning experiences. The mixed-methods approach is appropriate for evaluating new instructional models, as it integrates quantitative evidence of effectiveness with qualitative exploration of learning processes and perceptions.

### **EXCHIL Learning Stages**

The EXCHIL Model integrates experiential learning, contextual learning, and hybrid learning through five sequential stages. During the experience stage, students participate in authentic speaking activities, including discussions, simulations, and storytelling, to develop their real-life communication skills. The contextualization stage connects learning materials to real-life and academic situations relevant to students' personal experiences, making learning more meaningful. The hybridization stage combines face-to-face instruction with online learning platforms to provide flexible and interactive learning opportunities. During the reflection stage, students evaluate their performance through self-assessment, as well as peer and lecturer feedback, to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Finally, in the application stage, students apply their speaking skills in project-based and collaborative tasks that simulate authentic communication contexts, thereby reinforcing their fluency, confidence, and ability to express ideas effectively.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study are students of the English Education study program at Institut Prima Bangsa. A purposive sampling technique was applied with criteria such as having completed basic speaking courses and willingness to participate in EXCHIL learning activities. A total of 52 students from two classes participated, which was considered sufficient to provide reliable quantitative data and rich qualitative insights. Additionally,

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three students were selected for in-depth interviews to gain deeper qualitative perspectives. This sampling strategy was used because it allows the researcher to select participants most relevant to the research phenomenon [10].

Table 1. Student demographics

Items	Background Variables	Number of Higher Students	Percentage
Gender	Man	15	28.8%
	Woman	37	71.2%
	Total	52	100%

### Data Collection

Data were collected through four primary techniques: participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and pre-test–post-test assessments. Observations were conducted throughout the EXCHIL sessions to capture students' engagement, classroom interactions, and overall learning dynamics. Semi-structured interviews provided qualitative insights into students' learning experiences, perceived challenges, and reflections on the implementation of the EXCHIL Model. Questionnaires were administered to gather quantitative data on students' perceptions and motivation, using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Meanwhile, pre-test and post-test assessments were employed to evaluate students' speaking proficiency before and after the application of EXCHIL, using a speaking rubric that assessed fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary, each rated on a 1–4 scale. In addition, supporting documentation such as field notes, photos, and student assignments was utilized for triangulation purposes to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings [11].

### Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) Interactive Model, which involves three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [12]. Thematic coding was then applied to identify recurring patterns and themes related to learning processes and student perceptions. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, member checking, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement were conducted, along with triangulation techniques following the principles proposed by Denzin (1978) [13]. Quantitative data from questionnaires and pre-test–post-test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics in Microsoft Excel, including the calculation of mean scores, percentage improvements, and score distributions. Finally, the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings followed a side-by-side comparison strategy, where results from both data sets were interpreted together to obtain a holistic understanding of the EXCHIL Model's impact on students' speaking development. This integration enabled the study to describe both the process and the effectiveness of the EXCHIL Model in enhancing speaking achievement among English Education students at Institut Prima Bangsa Cirebon.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Adequate data must support the research results, as the findings serve as answers to the questions or hypotheses formulated in the introduction. The study involved 52 EFL students at the intermediate level; however, some participants still demonstrated difficulties and were at a lower level. Observations were made to identify measures used in encouraging EFL students' oral speaking skills. The observational data are then transcribed and analyzed further by referring to the theoretical framework of Richards & Rodgers (2014) and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) [14], [15]. The results of the analysis are presented in detail in the following section.

#### *Students' Needs in Improving Speaking Skills*

The findings show that students' needs for improving English speaking skills are diverse, but tend to focus on aspects such as hands-on experience, technology use, and support for the learning environment. This data shows that students not only need theory-based learning, but also real and contextual practice. This aligns with the concept of the EXCHIL model, which integrates hands-on experience with hybrid-based learning (online and offline) to create a more relevant and applicable learning environment.

Table 2. Students' Needs in Improving Speaking Skills

No	Questions	Response			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I need more opportunities to speak in real situations (role plays, simulations, contextual discussions).	40.4%	61.5%	3.8%	1.9%
2.	Hybrid-based learning (online and offline) helped me speak English more confidently.	25%	75%	1.9%	-
3.	I find it easier to learn to speak if I use digital media (videos, applications, interactive platforms).	21.2%	63.5%	17.3%	-
4.	I needed a supportive learning environment without fear of being ridiculed or criticized excessively	71.2%	30.8%	1.9%	-
5.	Feedback from lecturers and peers is crucial for improving my speaking skills.	57.7%	42.3%	-	-
6.	I feel that there is a need for hands-on experiential learning to improve speaking skills	42.3%	57.7%	-	-
7.	I need a variety of learning methods to stay motivated in learning to speak	38.5%	59.6%	1.9%	-

The data in Table 2 indicate that most college students require more speaking opportunities in real-life situations, such as through role-playing, simulations, and contextual discussions. This highlights the importance of creating an interactive learning environment for language learning, particularly in the context of speaking. Additionally, 75% of students reported that hybrid learning increased their confidence in English. These findings support the theories of Richards & Rodgers (2014) and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), which

emphasize the need for the integration of authentic context and experience in language teaching [14], [15]. Furthermore, the majority of respondents assessed that the use of digital media, such as videos, applications, and interactive platforms, was very helpful in the learning process, although a small percentage still found it challenging. The need for a supportive learning environment, free from fear of ridicule, is also very prominent, highlighting the importance of affective factors in developing speaking skills. Support in the form of *Feedback* from lecturers and peers is considered essential to improve abilities, making the learning process more collaborative and reflective.

The findings of this study align with previous studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of hands-on experiential learning in improving the speaking skills of FL students [16]. The integration of digital media in English learning can increase student participation and motivation, especially in the context of speaking [17]. Furthermore, hybrid learning creates flexibility and comfort for learners, especially in overcoming nervousness when speaking in public [18]. However, the findings also reveal challenges that students still face, such as limited vocabulary and inappropriate pronunciation, which is similar to the results of other studies that have found linguistic factors to be the main barriers to speaking skills [19]. Thus, the EXCHIL model, which emphasizes a variety of methods, direct experience, and the use of technology, can be a more comprehensive solution than the conventional model, as it addresses the needs of students from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor perspectives.

### ***Challenges in Speaking Skill Development***

The findings in the following table show the various challenges faced by students in developing English speaking skills. Affective factors are one of the primary obstacles, as evidenced by most students who still experience nervousness or anxiety when speaking in front of others. Additionally, the linguistic aspect poses an obstacle, particularly in finding the right vocabulary and maintaining the accuracy of pronunciation and intonation.

Data from Table 3 shows that vocabulary limitations and pronunciation problems are the most common difficulties experienced by students. This has an impact on their fluency in speaking, especially in real communication situations. Most students also stated that they rarely get the opportunity to practice outside the classroom, so the process of mastering speaking skills tends to be hampered. Although the use of technology is quite familiar to most students, more than 40% of respondents still admit that it is challenging to use it effectively to support English learning. These findings suggest that there is a need for more intensive guidance on the use of learning technology, enabling digital media to support speaking skills effectively.

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Table 3. Students' Challenges in Developing Speaking Skills

No	Questions	Response			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I feel nervous or anxious when speaking English in front of others.	26.9%	59.6%	15.4%	-
2.	I often struggle to find the right vocabulary when speaking.	34.6%	65.4%	5.8%	-
3.	I have problems with pronunciation and intonation	17.3%	75%	9.6%	-
4.	I rarely get the opportunity to practice speaking outside of class.	9.6%	53.8%	40.4%	1.9%
5.	I still have trouble using technology to support English learning.	5.8%	42.3%	51.9%	1.9%
6.	I feel less motivated if the learning method is too monotonous	17.3%	63.5%	21.2%	-
7.	I sometimes have trouble understanding English conversation	21.2%	71.2%	11.5%	-

Additionally, learning motivation is influenced by the variety of methods employed. Some students feel less excited if the learning method is too monotonous, which aligns with previous findings that variations in methods and direct experiences play a crucial role in maintaining motivation. Difficulties in understanding English conversation also indicate the need to strengthen listening skills to support speaking skills. These results align with research that identified speech anxiety, vocabulary limitations, and pronunciation as the primary barriers to mastering EFL speaking skills [19]. Vocabulary is the linguistic aspect that is most often an obstacle in the speaking skills experienced by students [20]. In line with this, the study emphasizes the importance of a supportive learning environment that focuses on real-world practice, enabling students to overcome nervousness and improve their speaking fluency [18]. These findings are also consistent with research that confirms the integration of digital technology in language learning can increase student participation, although intensive assistance is needed for its effectiveness [21]. Additionally, other studies have demonstrated that a range of methods, including hands-on experiential learning, can significantly enhance student motivation and engagement in speaking skills [22]. Thus, the challenges identified strengthen the relevance of applying the EXCHIL model, as it can address student problems through a contextual, collaborative, and hands-on, experience-based hybrid approach.

***Role of Hybrid Learning in Enhancing Speaking Performance***

Real-life examples revealed through interviews demonstrate how students perceive the role of hybrid learning in enhancing their speaking skills. Students at this intermediate level are generally aware of the benefits of combining online and offline learning, although some still struggle with face-to-face communication. As stated:

***Excerpt 1***

***Student A:*** "Hybrid learning is effective if we try to learn; it can improve English skills, especially speaking."

**Student B:** "It is more effective if we are consistent."

**Student C:** "If it is hybrid, it is better because you do not have to be face-to-face; if offline, it is a bit nervous with the other person."

### **Excerpt 2**

**Student A:** "Of course, it is very helpful and easy for us to be able to speak."

**Student B:** "Of course, it was very helpful because I learned a lot from digital media, the BBC website."

**Student C:** "It helps, because many online platforms, such as YouTube videos, ig reels, use English, so it can help in learning to speak."

These findings align with research indicating that the application of Hybrid problem-based learning can increase fluency while maintaining accuracy, particularly when interacting with students [23]. Furthermore, variations of hybrid methods, such as *Live Online Classes, face-to-face workshops, and flipped classrooms, contribute to strengthening courage while providing a more contextual communication experience* [24]. On the other hand, increasing confidence in online learning plays a significant role in student speaking performance, a condition also reflected in the findings of this study, where students feel more comfortable speaking without having to face the interlocutor directly [25].

### **Improvement in Speaking Achievement**

Speaking ability is one of the core skills in learning English, serving as an indicator of students' success in effective communication. To demonstrate the application of the EXCHIL model to the development of students' speaking skills, measurements were conducted through pre-tests and post-tests. The results of this measurement aim to compare student achievement before and after the intervention, so that it can be known to what extent contextual experience-based hybrid learning contributes to improved speaking skills. The comparative data of the test results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of Speaking Skills

PRE-TEST		%	POST-TEST		%
MAX	84		MAX	91	
MIN	48		MIN	60	
AVE	66,2		AVE	82,4	
60-75	16	31%	60-75	37	71%
<70	36	69%	<70	15	29%
Total		100%	Total		100%
(a)			(b)		

The results of the speaking test in tables 4(a) and (b) show a significant improvement after the application of the EXCHIL model. At the pre-test stage, the maximum score of students was 84, with a minimum score of 48, and an average (mean) of 66.2. Most students (69%) scored below 70, while only 31% were in the 60–75 range.

However, in the post-test after treatment, there was a reasonably clear improvement. The maximum score increased to 91, the minimum score increased to 60, and the class average increased to 82.4. The distribution of results also changed significantly: 71% of students were in the 60–75 range, while only 29% scored below 70. This comparison is also evident in Figure 1, which illustrates the change in the number of students in the 60–75 score category, increasing from 16 in the pre-test to 37 in the post-test. This improvement shows that most students experience improvements in terms of fluency, accuracy, and speaking courage after participating in learning with the EXCHIL model.

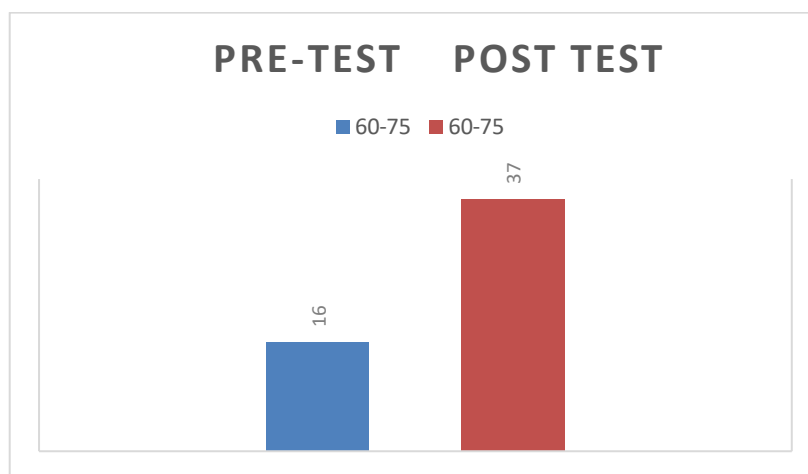


Figure 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

This comparison demonstrates that the application of the EXCHIL model has a positive impact on students' speaking skills. The increase in average scores and changes in the distribution of test results indicate that students experience not only individual development but also collective improvements in fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking. Approach *Hybrid problem-based learning* effectively increases fluency (*fluency*) and accuracy (*Accuracy*) in speaking English [23]. Similarly, Musliadi et al. (2024) found that variations of hybrid methods, such as the *flipped classroom* and *Workshop face-to-face*, can strengthen students' communication performance through a more contextual learning experience [24]. Hybrid environments can enhance the Oral Performance of EFL students by providing practical opportunities in a variety of communication situations, both online and offline [26]. Thus, the improvement in test scores in this study reinforces the evidence that contextual experience-based hybrid models such as EXCHIL are effective in driving the achievement of speaking skills.

The improvement in both quantitative and qualitative results demonstrates the potential effectiveness of the EXCHIL model in enhancing students' speaking skills. The integration of experiential learning [6] enabled learners to practice speaking through real-life experiences and reflective cycles, while the contextual component encouraged meaningful communication tied to students' social and academic realities [27]. Hybrid learning further provided flexibility and technological support for continuous engagement. Students' interview excerpts reinforced these outcomes, with many reporting increased confidence, reduced anxiety, and more opportunities for authentic communication through

the integration of online and offline learning. This aligns with previous studies emphasizing that hybrid learning environments enhance participation and reduce performance anxiety among EFL learners [23], [25].

The challenges identified, especially anxiety, vocabulary, and pronunciation, highlight areas where EXCHIL can be refined. These challenges correspond with previous findings that affective and linguistic barriers remain key obstacles in EFL speaking development [19], [20]. Addressing these issues through sustained experiential practice, peer collaboration, and digital support can help maintain learners' motivation and engagement [26]. Pedagogically, the EXCHIL framework offers practical guidance for EFL instructors on designing hybrid experiential tasks, such as role-play simulations tied to real-life contexts. These reflection journals link experiences to learning goals, and digital speaking projects utilizing platforms like Flip, Padlet, or YouTube. Theoretically, this study strengthens evidence supporting the synergy between experiential, contextual, and hybrid learning paradigms in EFL education, extending Kolb's learning cycle into a technology-rich environment where learners construct knowledge through doing, reflecting, and interacting.

This study, however, was conducted with a limited sample (52 students) from a single institution, and qualitative data were obtained from only three interviewees. The intervention period was relatively short, limiting longitudinal insight. Future research could implement the EXCHIL model across multiple institutions, extend its application to other language skills such as writing or listening, and examine long-term effects through a semester-long or year-long study. In summary, the EXCHIL model demonstrates a positive influence on students' speaking achievement and confidence through the integration of experiential, contextual, and hybrid learning. This study not only confirms the model's theoretical relevance but also offers pedagogical implications for developing dynamic, technology-supported EFL classrooms that address learners' cognitive, affective, and linguistic needs.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The results of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the EXCHIL Model has a positive influence on improving the speaking skills of students in the English Language Education Study Program. The increase in the pre-test and post-test scores, supported by qualitative evidence from interviews, indicates that EXCHIL effectively enhances students' fluency, confidence, and ability to overcome common speaking barriers such as nervousness and hesitation. These findings confirm the alignment between the research objectives and the outcomes achieved.

Theoretically, this study supports the integration of experiential and contextual learning within hybrid learning frameworks, highlighting the importance of combining authentic learning experiences with digital flexibility. Pedagogically, it offers a replicable instructional model for EFL educators seeking to improve students' communicative competence through interactive and student-centered approaches.

Looking forward, this research provides valuable insight into the broader potential of EXCHIL. Future studies could explore its application to other language skills, such as writing, listening, and reading, or examine its effectiveness across different institutions and

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learning environments. Ultimately, EXCHIL can guide educators in integrating experiential hybrid practices that foster real-world communication and advance innovative, hybrid-based English learning in higher education.

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