



# Platform for Teaching Speaking Skills Online in the Pandemic Era

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## Abstrak

Pendidik dihadapkan dengan kesulitan tak terduga terutama mengajar online. Banyak tantangan yang muncul akibat perlunya mendesain ulang kegiatan pembelajaran, antara lain ketidakkonsistenan, manajemen waktu yang menantang, mempertahankan minat siswa, dan meningkatnya kecurangan dalam ujian online. Karena wabah COVID-19, pemerintah Indonesia telah menerapkan kebijakan di bidang sekolah. Jika sebelumnya proses belajar mengajar, khususnya di perguruan tinggi, dilakukan secara tatap muka, kini telah beralih sepenuhnya ke pembelajaran daring. Skenario ini mengharuskan guru dan siswa untuk menggunakan pembelajaran online, yang berdampak pada pengalaman belajar mereka. Keterampilan berbicara sangat penting bagi manusia dalam, dengan tujuan untuk dapat berkomunikasi dengan masyarakat. Di masa pandemi, guru dan siswa kesulitan belajar karena lockdown di beberapa daerah. Di sini, platform dikategorikan sebagai Vacaroo, Voki, Fotobubble, dan VoiceThread untuk belajar berbicara dengan cara yang menyenangkan dan menyenangkan.

**Kata Kunci:** Covid-19, Bahasa Inggris, Online, Berbicara, Teknologi

## Abstract

Educators were faced with the unexpected difficulty of primarily teaching online. Many challenges arose as a result of the necessity to redesign instructional activities, including inconsistency, challenging time management, maintaining students' interest, and increasing cheating in online tests. Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Indonesian government has implemented policies in the school sector. Previously, the teaching and learning process, particularly in higher education, was conducted face to face, and it has now transitioned to entirely online learning. This scenario requires the teachers and students to use online learning, which has an impact on their learning experiences. Speaking skill is very essential for human beings in, with an order to be able to communicate with society. During the pandemic era, teachers and students face difficulties to study because of lockdown in some areas. Here, the platforms categorized as Vacaroo, Voki, Fotobubble, and VoiceThread for learning speaking in a fun way, and cherish.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, English, Online, Speaking, Technology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission (China) reported a cluster of pneumonia cases in the city on December 31, 2019, which were subsequently proven to be caused by SARS-CoV-2, a novel coronavirus. The first case of COVID-19 outside of China, especially in Thailand, was officially verified on January 13, 2020. Because the virus spreads rapidly throughout the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Martín-Sómer et al., 2021). During COVID-19, governments implemented lockdown and social distancing that disrupted daily life to limit the spread of the infection (Mouratidis, 2021).

The COVID-19 issue also had a consequence on education at all levels, from preschool to university, and resulted in the cancellation of several academic conferences. On May 25, 2020, there were 990 million pupils affected worldwide (56.6 percent of all students enrolled), and schools had been forced to close in 130 nations (Martín-Sómer et al., 2021). As a result, conventional education promptly shifted online. In response to the worldwide

### History:

Received : July 20, 2021

Revised : July 25, 2021

Accepted : October 13, 2021

Published : November 25, 2021

**Publisher:** Undiksha Press

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educational crisis, instructors were obliged to swiftly change their courses and approaches, adopting unfamiliar digital teaching tools without prior training (Mounika & Thamarana, 2018).

Educators were faced with the unexpected difficulty of primarily teaching online. Many challenges arose as a result of the necessity to redesign instructional activities, including inconsistency, challenging time management, maintaining students' interest, and increasing cheating in online tests. Furthermore, some research indicated that online education caused stress in students, which should be avoided (Martín-Sómer et al., 2021). The usage of interactive educational technologies was explored to minimize the stress and lack of interest among students that can result in a loss in learning outcomes due to online teaching (Hughes et al., 2020).

The online learning model has influenced teaching-learning performance, particularly in the English-speaking area. This study focuses on discussing the current phenomenon of using online resources, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the speaking learning process. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge between teachers and students could run well. Here, the writer offers a fun way to teach speaking skills in this pandemic era.

## 2. METHOD

This study is conducted with qualitative method by Miles & Huberman (1994). According to Miles & Huberman (1994), there are four steps in data analysis, namely, data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The online learning model has influenced teaching-learning performance, particularly in the English-speaking area. This study focuses on discussing the current phenomenon of using online resources, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the speaking learning process. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge between teachers and students could run well. Here, the writer offers a fun way to teach speaking skills in this pandemic era.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Speaking*

People learn a new language to be able to communicate by using the language. Therefore, speaking is necessary to be mastered by those who want to learn a new language. In English, speaking is one of the four skills. It is a crucial skill for the teaching and learning process of language because it will be used to do conversation (Fitriani et al., 2020). Besides, speaking is also one of the different and difficult skills to be learned by the student (Rao, 2019). It deals with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciations, and fluency (Syafiq et al., 2021). People communicate through language by using the utterance. They have to pronounce the word correctly to avoid any misunderstanding while communicating. Some of the problems that students experience when learning to speak are pronunciation, fluency, intonation, fillers words, and accuracy. bashful and self-conscious (Fitria et al., 2021). Those problems will be able to solve by practicing many times. Because of the pandemic, students and teachers should be able to take advantage of the online speaking platform.

### *Platforms for Teaching Speaking Skills Online*

#### *Vocaroo*

Vocaroo is a platform that allows instructors to digitally record voice instructions for QR Codes that are utilized in a variety of activities such as spelling tests, learning centers, and motivating praise boards for students to use throughout the day. The ability for a teacher to hear audio recordings before printing QR Codes is a key feature of Vocaroo. During

speaking, there is no limit on the number of recordings that can be created. Vocaroo may be customized to fit the demands of the teacher. Using Vocaroo, instructors can make QR Codes both vocally and graphically to accommodate the learning requirements of special education students (Kim, 2018).

Students with special needs can use Vocaroo to create QR Codes to convey individualized replies for wants, needs, and participation in-class activities. Students with limitations in a moderate to severe classroom can utilize Vocaroo QR Codes to access numerous topic area replies provided by the instructor, allowing them to be active participants in all settings across the school. When the general education and special education teachers, work together to create QR Codes for kids to scan and reply to questions, everyone benefits in the inclusion classroom (Kim, 2018).

For the students, it is also easy to use Vocaroo. They only have to search for [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com) and they will be able to start recording. They have to allow the application to record their voices first and it will be automatically recording. After they finished, they can listen to the recording right away. If they are satisfied with the result, they can send it to the teacher by the platform used by the teacher (Merino-munive et al., 2021). If not, they can retry and record the whole from the beginning.

### **Voki**

Voki is utilized by teachers in a variety of academic areas. It provides an effective and entertaining means of practicing speaking, listening, and writing in English. English language learners may record and exchange audio messages in English. Vokis provides language teachers with a powerful and enjoyable way to help their students improve their speaking abilities in a fun and engaging way. Furthermore, because of the typing option, they allow learners to improve their writing abilities. The Voki program is intended to be simple to use, even for those with no prior expertise. It does not require any software to be downloaded and can be accessed using any web browser on any computer connected to the Internet. Furthermore, “digital natives” (those born after 1980 and raised with Internet technology) are likely to grasp the ideas underlying Voki and link it with other widgets they have previously used (Aikina & Zubkova, 2015).

The application was handy. The Voki application to access the cloud-based library and file sharing from anywhere, at any time, feel comfortable while learning languages, increased speech motivation, exposure to speaking English outside the classroom, collaborate with teachers and friends, and receive feedback. Voki is a tool for teaching and learning how to speak. Voki enhances the teaching process by providing a new means for the instructor to practice speaking and a motivating training tool for the learner. The student who practiced speaking through Voki would become more proficient. This applications with fun and fascinating features can be beneficial not only for foreign language acquisition but also for developing fundamental language skills (Yeşilbağ & Korkmaz, 2021).

Voki is an application that used animation to engage the students' motivation in learning. The students do not have to make an account to use this application. All they have to do is open the Voki application from Google ([www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)) and they have to make their avatar, whether it is a boy or girl. They are also able to use their creativity to choose their avatars' clothes, accessories, and backgrounds. Then they have to write the sentences that they want their avatars to say, click done, and publish. They can share a link of their Voki's avatar with their teacher and friend. They can make conversation with their friend by using their avatars. It will help them to learn writing (grammar), listening (pronunciation), and also speaking (fluency) (Ramdani, 2019).

### **Fotobubble**

Fotobubble is a significant tool because it allows users to record about one minute of their voice and then playback and evaluate that recording, which is a crucial component of teaching and learning. The option to personalize their Fotobubble recordings by uploading a photo or picture and utilizing the time to discuss that shot or tell the listener something fascinating about his or her life is what makes this technology appealing to students (Coskun & Marlowe, 2015). One of the most significant benefits of utilizing Fotobubble is that it prepares students to talk in the target language they are studying aloud. This is extremely difficult for some students to perform, especially in a classroom setting with other students. Students who are learning English may be self-conscious about their speaking abilities and may be hesitant to talk out of fear of making a mistake, even if their teacher encourages them to do so (Gregersen et al., 1991; Kitano, 2001). It is also very unusual to have students who refuse to speak in class, thus this specific learning tool reduces the "affective filter" of students by allowing them to be alone and record their voice while their peers and instructor cannot see or hear them. Students will be able to rehearse and listen to the sound of their voices, becoming much more comfortable talking in the classroom (Coskun & Marlowe, 2015).

Another advantage of Fotobubble is that users may make as many attempts, rehearse, and record as many times as they like until the recording is excellent. Teachers may use Fotobubble to assign new speaking assignments each week, and students will benefit from the process and eventually grow comfortable speaking in their target language making them a lot more willing and confident participants in classroom conversations (Coskun & Marlowe, 2015).

The students can use this application when they want to tell a story about something. First, they have to open the fotobubble ([www.fotobubble.com](http://www.fotobubble.com)) and then make an account of it. They can log in by making an account consisting of a username and password or by using a Facebook account. Click create and upload a photo about a thing that they want to tell. When the photo is uploaded then they can start the recording to describe the photo. They can retry as many as possible to get the best recording (Ashraf et al., 2017).

### **Voicethread**

VoiceThread is a multimedia presenting tool that enables people to discuss images, documents, videos, and audio. It may be used in large groups, small groups, or one-on-one settings (Ghoneim & Elghotmy, 2016). VoiceThread, for example, acts as a virtual community, allowing learners to easily communicate, become interested in, and participate in a variety of activities, fostering more collaborative interactions, which is an important component of online learning (Ward et al., 2019). There are several benefits of VoiceThread in online speaking learning: 1) fostering "social presence" among students and with the teacher, (2) cooperation among students using the tool improves "students' feeling of community" and motivation, (3) it can encourage improved "understanding of visual ideas", and (4) hearing a person's speech tone increases grasp of subtleties (Chan & Pallapu, 2012).

VoiceThread, for example, may enhance authenticity and ease the virtual learning communication and collaboration processes by allowing users to share text, voice, and video comments (Ching & Hsu, 2013). The previous study certainly suggests that VoiceThread has a high potential for inspiring and engaging students in higher education, developing higher-order thinking, and facilitating cooperation processes. VoiceThread is easy to use by the students. They have to make an account first through [www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com) by using their email. They can make a VoiceThread by pressing the create button. They can put photos and then fill them with the audio by recording their voices. One photo will become one slide and the students can do the collaborative learning by recording their voices one by one. They can

retake the audio if they made some mistakes while recording and save the video when they finished. The students can give some comments to other students by using the phone comments or video.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Speaking as communication tools have to be mastered by people to be able to do the conversation. Several media can be used to teach speaking online. They can try as many as they want to be fluent and have good pronunciation. Each media has its purpose which can help teacher and students to achieve their own goal. It could be such a great choice for teachers and students to do the speaking teaching and learning process for having so many choices. It would be better for them to choose the most suitable media to get their goal in learning. The students do not have to be afraid if they think their result is unsatisfying because they can record their voice several times until they think it matches the qualification. Vocaroo, Fotobabble, and VoiceThread can help the students in checking their mistakes several times while Voki can help the students to know the correct pronunciation. Because speaking is all about how to state your opinion and be able to be understood by the listener.

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