Optimization of English Ability Through Speak It, Love It, Ace It Method

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Abstract

The problems addressed in this study are the students' low confidence and performance in English speaking and comprehension due to uniform teaching strategies that do not accommodate diverse learning needs. Speak It, Love It, Ace It" method is used to solve the problems. This study aims to enhance the English-speaking proficiency and confidence of 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid by assessing their current abilities, implementing the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method within a differentiated learning framework tailored to diverse proficiency levels and learning styles, and evaluating the effectiveness of this integrated intervention through both qualitative and quantitative measures. The study, involving 25 purposively selected 10th-grade students, employed a two-cycle design of planning, action, observation, and reflection, using observation, tests, interviews, and documentation to analyze changes in students' performance and participation across cycles. The findings indicated a clear positive trend, with notable gains in speaking fluency, vocabulary use, and classroom engagement. Students demonstrated greater motivation and more positive attitudes toward learning English, and overall performance improved significantly across cycles, surpassing the established success criteria. These results highlight the potential of integrating affective engagement strategies with differentiated instruction to enhance oral proficiency in EFL secondary contexts.

Keywords: *differentiated learning; English ability; Speak It, Love It, Ace It*

INTRODUCTION

The empirical challenges of English language acquisition among 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora can be attributed to a combination of linguistic and psychological factors. Many students struggle with essential language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which are critical for effective communication. Research indicates that a significant number of students exhibit low confidence and fear of making mistakes, leading to anxiety when speaking English. This fear often results in passive participation during lessons, where students prefer silence over attempting to communicate in English. Consequently, the overall speaking proficiency among these students remains low, as evidenced by their performance scores, which fall within the lower category of the curriculum standards (Maji et al., 2022), (Nathasyach et al., 2022), (Fitriani et al., 2021).

The theoretical framework surrounding these challenges can be understood through various language acquisition theories that emphasize the importance of both cognitive and sociocultural factors. Cognitive theory suggests that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement and practice; however, the lack of motivation and

perceived difficulty in learning English hampers this process. Additionally, sociocultural theory highlights the role of social interactions in language development, indicating that collaborative activities could enhance speaking skills. To address these issues effectively, educators must create a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking in language use while integrating diverse teaching strategies that cater to different learning styles. This approach not only aims to improve linguistic competencies but also seeks to alleviate the psychological barriers that hinder students' willingness to engage in English communication (Antalan et al., 2017), (Yulita et al., 2025), (Haq Nazki, 2024).

Recent studies focusing on the optimization of English language abilities for 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora have explored the effectiveness of the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* (SLA) method within a framework of differentiated learning. One significant study implemented Differentiated Instruction (DI) strategies over a seven-week period, targeting mixed-proficiency learners in EFL speaking classes. The researchers utilized tiered tasks and flexible grouping to cater to varying student needs, resulting in a notable improvement in speaking skills as measured by pre-tests and post-tests. The findings indicated that students not only enhanced their speaking abilities but also reported increased engagement and motivation due to the tailored approach, which allowed them to participate actively in their learning process (Purnamaningwulan, 2024), (Aufa, 2024).

In addition, the integration of the SLA method with differentiated learning principles has been shown to create a more dynamic classroom environment. By allowing students to express their understanding through various activities—such as group discussions, role-plays, and individual presentations—the method promotes authentic language use and builds confidence among learners. This aligns with previous research highlighting the benefits of integrated skill approaches, which emphasize that simultaneous engagement in listening, speaking, reading, and writing fosters better language acquisition. Teachers noted that students who previously struggled with traditional methods became more enthusiastic and willing to participate when exposed to the SLA framework, further supporting the notion that differentiated instruction can significantly enhance English language learning outcomes in diverse classroom settings (Akmal et al., 2020).

The gap between recent studies on the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* (SLA) method and the current empirical and theoretical aspects of optimizing English language abilities for 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora lies in the integration of active learning strategies and the practical application of language skills. While recent studies highlight the effectiveness of the SLA method through differentiated learning approaches, they often do not fully address how these methods can be systematically implemented to overcome specific challenges faced by students, such as anxiety and lack of confidence in speaking (Toyib & Syafi'i, 2018). Empirical evidence suggests that students benefit significantly from active engagement in language use, yet there remains a need for comprehensive frameworks that incorporate these findings into classroom practices. This disconnect indicates that while theoretical models advocate for interactive learning environments, practical applications in the classroom may still rely heavily on traditional teaching methods that do not fully leverage the potential of active learning.

Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings of language acquisition emphasize the importance of social interaction and contextual learning, yet current empirical studies may not sufficiently explore how these factors can be effectively integrated within the SLA framework at SMA At-Tajdid. For instance, while differentiated instruction is recognized as beneficial for catering to diverse learner needs, there is limited research on how to

tailor the SLA method specifically to address varying levels of English proficiency within a single classroom setting. Bridging this gap requires a more nuanced understanding of both the psychological barriers students face and the pedagogical strategies that can be employed to foster a supportive learning environment. By aligning empirical findings with robust theoretical frameworks, educators can enhance the effectiveness of the SLA method and ultimately improve English language acquisition outcomes for students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora.

To address the identified gap in optimizing English language abilities for 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora through the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* (SLA) method in differentiated learning, the following research question can be formulated: 1) How can the implementation of the SLA method assess the current proficiency levels of English-speaking skills among 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid? 2) What are the impacts of implementing the speak it, love it, ace it within a differentiated learning? 3) How does this integrated approach impact students' speaking abilities and their confidence in using English, as measured through both qualitative and quantitative methods?

The objectives of this study are: First, to assess the current proficiency levels of English-speaking skills among 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid and identify specific areas for improvement. Second, to implement the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method within a differentiated learning framework, tailoring activities to meet varying proficiency levels and learning styles, thereby fostering a more engaging and supportive environment. Third, to evaluate the impact of this integrated approach on students' speaking abilities and their confidence in using English, using both qualitative and quantitative measures. By achieving these objectives, the study aims to provide insights into effective pedagogical strategies that can bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks of language acquisition and practical classroom applications.

The novelty of optimizing English ability for 10th-grade students at SMA At-Tajdid Muhammadiyah Blora through the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* (SLA) method in differentiated learning lies in its comprehensive approach that combines active engagement, emotional support, and tailored instructional strategies. Unlike traditional methods that often emphasize rote memorization and passive learning, the SLA method fosters a dynamic learning environment where students are encouraged to express themselves freely and creatively. This approach not only addresses the diverse proficiency levels within the classroom but also actively seeks to reduce anxiety associated with language use. By integrating elements of conversation-based learning with personalized tasks, the SLA method promotes authentic communication and builds students' confidence in their speaking abilities.

Additionally, the application of the SLA method within a differentiated learning framework presents a unique opportunity to explore the intersection of pedagogical theory and practical classroom implementation. This approach allows educators to adapt their teaching styles to meet individual student needs, thereby enhancing engagement and motivation. The novelty is further amplified by the method's focus on creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages risk-taking in language use, which is often overlooked in conventional English language instruction. By systematically addressing both cognitive and emotional aspects of language learning.

METHOD

The Study Design

The researchers formulated the study using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which followed a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting conducted in two cycles. The research began with a pre-observation phase that identified students' low confidence and poor performance in English speaking. Based on these findings, the researchers planned by assessing students' English proficiency levels and designing appropriate strategies using the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method within a differentiated learning framework. During the acting stage, the method was implemented in the classroom according to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. The observing stage involved monitoring the learning process, student engagement, and performance. Finally, in the reflecting stage, the researchers analyzed the data after each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the method and identify areas for improvement.

CAR is particularly suitable for educational settings where the goal is to solve practical learning problems collaboratively and iteratively. The two cycles provided opportunities for continuous improvement: the first cycle focused on identifying initial challenges and testing the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method, while the second cycle refined the strategies based on reflection and feedback from the first. This interactive process ensured that the intervention was responsive to students' needs and led to measurable improvements in their confidence and speaking ability.

Data and Data Collection Technique

The data of this research were data of how students students' speaking ability and how were the students' engagement, confidence, and interaction. The sources of the data were the students' score of pre-test, post-test, the teacher's field note result, and the result of questionnaire and interview taken from the students of the Grade 10 students of At-Tajdid Blora High School, who participated directly in the learning process.

Data were collected through multiple instruments to ensure accuracy and validity. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure quantitative improvements in students' speaking performance, while classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals provided qualitative data on student engagement, confidence, and interaction. To verify data reliability, test results were cross-checked with observation notes and interview findings, ensuring consistency across data sources. Triangulation was applied to strengthen the validity of the results by comparing outcomes from different instruments. Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the study; participants provided informed consent, their involvement was voluntary, and all data were kept confidential with anonymity preserved to protect students' identities.

Analyzing Data

There were two techniques in analyzing data, quantitative and qualitative to evaluate the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method within a differentiated learning framework in improving students' speaking ability. There were two stages in analyzing the quantitative data. First, it measured the individual score of the students' pre-test results. Second, it analyzed the mean of the students' scores of the pre-test, post-test of cycle 1, and post-test of cycle 2. Then, to analyze the qualitative data, the researchers applied Constant Comparative Method as suggested by Glaser in Moleong (2005: 288-289). CCM was analyzing the data by comparing one category to another constantly. The data analysis

process included data reduction, data classification, data synthesis, and ended by action hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data revealed a marked improvement in both students' speaking ability and students' engagement, confidence, and interaction in English speaking after the implementation of the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method across two CAR cycles.

The students made good progress in students' speaking ability. The improvement can be recognized by comparing the students' average score of post-tests of cycle 1. The students' average score of pre-tests was 58.4, the students' average score of post-tests of cycle 1 was 70.8 and the students' average score of post-tests of cycle 2 was 78. So, there was an improvement the students' average score in reading from 61 to 72. Besides, the mean of each indicator also increased. The improvement of each indicator are shown from the table 1.

Table 1. The Mean of Post-test in cycle 1 and cycle 2

Indicator	Mean of Pre-Test	Mean of Post-test Cycle 1	Mean of Post-test Cycle 2
1. Fluency	56	70	76
2. Pronunciation	57	72	78
3. Vocabulary	60	70	80
4. Grammar Accuracy	56	68	74
5. Confidence & Expression	63	74	82
Average	58.4	70.8	78

The observation checklist showed the increasing of the students' speaking ability. In implementing the method, there were 6 students got difficult in demonstrating the speaking test. When they were asked to deliver presentation the task after discussing, their speaking was not fluent. Based on the last meeting activities, there was the improvement of the students in speaking test. There was only one student who found the mistake in putting the vocabulary in speaking test. In the last meeting, all the students' speaking ability improved. Besides, the improvement also can be recognized by comparing the students' average score of post-tests of cycle 2. The students' average score of post-tests of cycle 1 is 70.8 and the students' average score of post-tests of cycle 2 is 78.

The observed increase in fluency (from 58 to 78) indicates growth in discourse and strategic competence—students became better at maintaining conversation flow, choosing appropriate expressions, and compensating for gaps in vocabulary or grammar. At the same time, rising confidence shows improved sociolinguistic competence—students felt more comfortable adjusting language to different contexts, audiences, and purposes.

In the last meeting of cycle 2, it was similar with the previous meeting. Most of the students' engagement, confidence, and interaction improved. They were active. They enjoyed in learning the material. They were curios to find to do the task and to practice the speaking to the teacher or their friend. They said that the teacher wanted to improve the method in improving the students' speaking ability. Except that, they said that the teacher always appreciated to the students and motivated them too. S11 said, *"saya setuju kalau bapak menggunakan metode ini, menurut saya bapak sungguh-sungguh ingin merubah metode yang biasa ustad gunakan ketika mengajar speaking dengan metode yang cocok ini.(I aggree that you apply this method, for me you mean to change your conventional method in teaching speaking with this suitable method)"* The observation was also supported by the result of the students' questionnaire; the improvement of the students' learning motivation.

Discussion

The findings provide strong evidence that that the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method, combined with differentiated learning, effectively improves 10th grade students' English-speaking abilities. The gradual approach of encouraging students to *Speak It* through low-pressure exercises builds fluency and reduces speaking anxiety. Moving to *Love It* engages students emotionally and personally, which increases intrinsic motivation. Finally, *Ace It* challenges students at their level, promoting mastery and confidence. To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, instructors can use activities approach combine language input and communicative output (Bahrani, 2012).

The *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method can be understood as a cyclical process that develops learners' fluency and confidence through affective engagement, communicative practice, and scaffolding principles widely supported by contemporary language learning theories (Simamora et al., 2020).

The *Speak It* phase emphasized oral production and interaction, aligning closely with communicative competence theory (Lian, 1985). Students were encouraged to use English in meaningful exchanges, focusing on fluency rather than accuracy. This phase reflects Task-Based Learning principles, where communication tasks promote automaticity and spontaneous language use. By engaging in low-stakes speaking tasks, students activate discourse and strategic competence, gradually improving their ability to express ideas fluidly and meaningfully.

The *Love It* phase focuses on emotional connection and confidence building. It asserted the motivation and low anxiety facilitate better language acquisition. The supportive, collaborative environment helps reduce learners' affective barriers, fostering self-belief and intrinsic motivation as described in Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017). This phase also aligns with research on affective engagement, showing that positive emotions and peer support enhance willingness to communicate.

The *Ace It* phase represented the stage of performance and mastery, where learners independently apply what they have practiced. This phase reflected scaffolding the gradual removal of teacher support as learners gain competence. The differentiated nature of tasks allows learners at varying proficiency levels to perform successfully, connecting to Differentiated Instruction principles (Purnamaningwulan, 2024) which emphasize tailored learning experiences to meet diverse learner needs. By completing communicative challenges independently, students experience achievement, reinforcing both fluency and confidence.

The findings of this study contributed both theoretically and pedagogically to the understanding of how integrated, affective, and scaffolded instruction enhances learners' fluency and confidence in speaking English. Theoretically, the results confirmed that structured opportunities for authentic interaction can develop not only linguistic and discourse competence but also strategic and sociolinguistic skills. The observable improvement in fluency supports Task-Based Learning Theory, which emphasizes meaning-focused communication as a driver of spontaneous language use.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, the significant improvement in students' fluency and students' engagement, confidence, and interaction through the *Speak It–Love It–Ace It* method offers meaningful contributions to both language learning theory and pedagogy. Theoretically, these findings confirm that language development was strengthened when communicative, affective, and cognitive dimensions interact.

The research showed that the implementation of the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method gives a significant improvement in students' speaking performance across various indicators, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and especially confidence. The use of engaging and student-centered activities such as songs, role-plays, and storytelling contributed to higher motivation and active participation in speaking tasks.

The method's structured stages *Speak It (initiation), Love It (personalization), and Ace It (mastery)* aligned well with students' learning needs and helped reduce speaking anxiety while encouraging consistent practice. Differentiated learning strategies ensured that all students, regardless of their initial proficiency level, had access to meaningful and challenging tasks suited to their abilities.

In conclusion, the *Speak It, Love It, Ace It* method is not only effective for enhancing English speaking skills, but also cultivates a positive and supportive classroom environment. It is recommended for future implementation in English language teaching, particularly in settings with diverse student abilities.

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