



The Implementation and Impact of the English Area on Students' Speaking Skills at Vocation High School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-13 Revised: 2026-06-28 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: English Area Program; speaking skills; vocational high school. DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11222 Corresponding Author: Nurul Ismi Putri Mansur 2202020018@uinpalopo.ac.id English Education Study Program, State Islamic University of Palopo	<i>Speaking skills, particularly pronunciation and fluency, remain challenging for vocational high school students due to limited opportunities to practice English in authentic communication. This study aimed to describe the implementation of the English Area program and its impact on the speaking skills of tenth-grade students at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings showed that the English Area program was implemented through three main activities: Morning Vocabulary, Object Labeling, and Daily Conversation Practice. During the implementation, the teacher acted as a facilitator, language model, motivator, evaluator, and provider of corrective feedback. The program positively contributed to the development of students' pronunciation and fluency by providing regular opportunities to practice English in a supportive learning environment. In conclusion, the English Area program supported the development of students' speaking skills, particularly pronunciation and fluency.</i>

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the most essential language skills as it allows learners to express ideas, exchange information, and participate in social interactions. However, for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing speaking skills remains a major challenge. Many Indonesian students have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom, which often results in low speaking confidence, inaccurate pronunciation, and limited fluency.

This issue is particularly evident in vocational high schools, where students are expected to acquire communication skills that support their future professional needs. For students in the Computer and Network Engineering program, English proficiency is important not only for daily communication but also for understanding technical terminology, operating software, and participating in workplace interactions. Therefore,

establishing a learning environment that promotes authentic English use is essential for supporting students' speaking development.

One strategy that has been implemented in Indonesian schools to encourage English use is the English Area program, which provides students with opportunities to practice English through designated activities. This program aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and authentic language use as key elements of language learning. By increasing students' exposure to English beyond regular classroom instruction, the program creates opportunities for learners to practice oral communication in more natural contexts. In this study, speaking skills are examined through two observable indicators proposed by Brown (2004), namely pronunciation and fluency, as these aspects represent important components of students' oral performance during English Area activities.

Previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of English-speaking environments to students' speaking development. Awaliyah (2020) found that the English Day program supported students' speaking skills through continuous exposure to English use. Similarly, Muliadi and Rosyidi (2021) reported that the English Area program contributed to students' speaking development and learner autonomy. In addition, Fatahillah and Agustina (2024), Nugroho (2024), and Septiyana et al. (2020) highlighted that authentic English-speaking activities could enhance students' confidence, participation, and speaking performance.

Despite these findings, previous research has primarily focused on Islamic boarding schools and higher education contexts, used quantitative approaches, or examined general teaching strategies rather than the implementation of English Area programs in vocational education. Furthermore, limited studies have explored how such programs are implemented in vocational high schools and how classroom-based English activities contribute to students' pronunciation and fluency development. Therefore, further investigation is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation process and the contribution of English Area programs to students' speaking skills in vocational contexts.

Addressing this research gap, this study explores two research questions: (1) How is the English Area program implemented for tenth-grade students at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara? and (2) What impact does the English Area program have on students' speaking skills at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara? Accordingly, this study aims to describe the implementation of the English Area program and examine its impact on tenth-grade students' speaking skills. Specifically, it investigates the English Area activities, the teacher's role in facilitating the program, and the development of students' pronunciation and fluency. The novelty of this study lies in its qualitative exploration of an English Area program within a vocational high school context, providing deeper insights into how the program is implemented and how it supports students' speaking development.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore the implementation of the English Area program and its impact on students' speaking skills at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara. A qualitative approach was selected because it enabled an in-depth exploration of the implementation process, the teacher's roles, and students' speaking development within their natural learning context.

The research was conducted at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The participants included one English teacher and nine tenth-grade students from the Computer and Network Engineering program. Purposive sampling was applied to select the

participants because they were directly involved in the English Area program and were considered capable of providing relevant information related to the research objectives.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The instruments consisted of an observation checklist, interview guides, and documentation sheets. The observation checklist was developed based on the implementation components of the English Area program and Brown's (2004) speaking indicators, namely pronunciation and fluency. The semi-structured interview guides contained open-ended questions designed to explore the teacher's and students' experiences, perceptions, and responses toward the program.

Classroom observations were conducted during four English Area sessions to examine the implementation of learning activities, the teacher's roles, and students' speaking performance. Interviews were conducted with the English teacher and selected students to obtain deeper insights into their experiences with the program. In addition, documentation, including photographs and school records, was collected to support the findings and strengthen data credibility through methodological triangulation.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (2014) interactive model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The data were systematically selected, organized, and coded based on the research questions before being categorized into emerging themes. The credibility of the findings was ensured through data triangulation by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation.

3. Result

Implementation of the English Area Program

The English Area program at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara was implemented through structured classroom activities that encouraged students to use English in meaningful learning situations. The program consisted of three main activities: Morning Vocabulary, Object Labeling, and Daily Conversation Practice. These activities were conducted consistently during the four observation sessions and provided students with opportunities to practice English through interactions with the teacher and their peers.

Morning Vocabulary focused on introducing vocabulary related to students' daily activities and vocational context. During this activity, the teacher modeled the pronunciation of new words and guided students in using them through simple oral responses. Object Labeling allowed students to connect English vocabulary with physical objects in their learning environment by attaching English labels to classroom items. Meanwhile, Daily Conversation Practice encouraged students to use common expressions, including greetings, asking and answering questions, and expressing gratitude during classroom communication. Throughout the observation sessions, students gradually demonstrated greater participation and willingness to communicate using English.

The observations further indicated that the teacher played an important role in facilitating the implementation of the English Area program. The teacher prepared and managed classroom activities, modeled appropriate language use, encouraged student participation, and provided corrective feedback on pronunciation and language production. These practices contributed to a supportive classroom atmosphere where students were encouraged to use English despite occasional errors.

Impact of the English Area Program on Students' Speaking Skills

The implementation of the English Area program contributed to the development of students' speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation and fluency. During the initial sessions, many students showed hesitation when speaking English, applied Indonesian pronunciation patterns, and frequently relied on teacher support when responding to

questions. Their verbal responses were generally limited and occurred within highly guided interactions.

Across subsequent sessions, students demonstrated gradual changes in their oral performance. Through repeated exposure to English activities, teacher modeling, and pronunciation feedback, students began to produce words with greater accuracy and showed increased confidence when responding in English. Their participation became more active, and they appeared less dependent on teacher assistance during classroom interactions.

A similar pattern was observed in students' fluency development. In the early sessions, students frequently paused, hesitated, and required additional prompts to express their ideas. However, as they became more familiar with the activities, some students were able to respond more spontaneously, initiate short exchanges, and maintain simple conversations with reduced teacher guidance. Overall, the observations showed that regular opportunities to use English within the program supported the gradual development of students' speaking performance.

4. Discussion

Implementation of the English Area Program

The findings indicate that the English Area program provided students with opportunities to engage in English communication through structured classroom activities. Rather than limiting English use to formal language exercises, the program integrated English into routine classroom interactions, allowing students to practice the language for communicative purposes. This finding reflects the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize meaningful interaction and authentic language use as essential elements of language learning. Through regular participation in communicative activities, students were able to experience English as a tool for interaction within their learning environment.

The findings also highlight the important role of the teacher in supporting the implementation of the program. The teacher functioned not only as an activity facilitator but also as a language model, motivator, and provider of corrective feedback. These roles contributed to a supportive classroom atmosphere where students were encouraged to participate despite making occasional language errors. This finding supports Brown's (2004) perspective that effective speaking instruction requires opportunities for meaningful communication accompanied by appropriate feedback. Therefore, teacher involvement was an important factor in creating conditions that encouraged students to engage in continuous speaking practice.

These findings support previous research emphasizing the value of English-speaking environments in language learning. Awaliyah (2020) found that continuous English exposure through the English Day program encouraged students to practice speaking, while Muliadi and Rosyidi (2021) reported that the English Area program supported speaking development and learner autonomy. Similarly, Fatahillah and Agustina (2024) highlighted the contribution of teacher-supported communicative activities to students' confidence and participation. Extending these previous studies, the present research demonstrates how an English Area program can be implemented within a vocational high school context, where structured classroom activities provide opportunities for students to use English in relation to their learning environment and future professional needs.

Impact of the English Area Program on Students' Speaking Skills

The findings suggest that participation in the English Area program supported the gradual development of students' speaking skills, particularly pronunciation and fluency. The repeated use of English through classroom activities provided students with opportunities to become more familiar with English sounds, expressions, and interaction patterns. This finding is consistent with Brown's (2004) view that pronunciation and fluency are important components of speaking proficiency that develop through continuous practice and meaningful communication.

The development of students' pronunciation can be interpreted through Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of learners' awareness of linguistic features in the acquisition process. In this study, teacher modeling and corrective feedback appeared to help students recognize differences between their initial pronunciation patterns and target English pronunciation. As students repeatedly encountered and practiced these features, they became more aware of pronunciation accuracy during speaking activities.

The development of fluency can also be understood through Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment facilitates language acquisition. The classroom atmosphere created through the English Area program encouraged students to participate without excessive concern about making mistakes. This condition allowed students to respond more confidently and participate more spontaneously in English interactions. Furthermore, the findings correspond with interaction-based perspectives of language learning, which emphasize that communication opportunities enable learners to develop language abilities through meaningful exchanges.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies on English-speaking environments and speaking development. Nugroho (2024) reported that continuous English exposure supported learners' communication skills through habitual language use, while Septiyana et al. (2020) found that the English Zone program enhanced students' confidence and participation in speaking activities. However, unlike studies that primarily examined the effectiveness of English-speaking programs, this research provides a qualitative exploration of how the English Area program operates and contributes to students' pronunciation and fluency development within a vocational high school setting. This context-specific perspective expands existing discussions by illustrating how structured English-speaking environments can support oral language development in vocational education.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of the English Area program and its contribution to students' speaking skills at SMKN 5 Kolaka Utara. The findings demonstrate that the program was implemented through structured classroom activities that provided students with opportunities to use English in authentic learning contexts. The teacher's role as a facilitator, language model, motivator, and provider of corrective feedback was an important element in supporting student participation and encouraging continuous English use during classroom interactions.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the English Area program supported the gradual development of students' pronunciation and fluency. Through repeated engagement in communicative activities, students became more familiar with English expressions, showed greater confidence, and participated more actively in speaking practices. These findings emphasize the importance of establishing an English-rich learning environment to support speaking development, particularly in vocational high school

contexts where students require communication skills relevant to future professional settings.

This study has several limitations. It involved only one English teacher and nine tenth-grade students from a single vocational high school, and the data were collected within a limited observation period. Therefore, the findings should be understood within the specific context of the research and interpreted cautiously when applied to other educational settings.

Based on these findings, schools are encouraged to maintain and strengthen the implementation of English Area programs by increasing consistency and integrating more varied communicative activities, including role plays, group discussions, English games, and presentation tasks. Future studies may investigate other aspects of speaking proficiency, such as vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and interactive communication, to develop a broader understanding of how English-speaking environments support students' oral language development.

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