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# DEVELOPING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE BISPRO TALK LEARNING FRAMEWORK

**Refdi Akmal*[1], Muhammad Fadli[2]**
[1,2]*Politeknik Negeri Lampung, Indonesia*

**Corresponding author's email:** refdi@polinela.ac.id

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**Abstract:** Despite the growing demand for communicative competence in vocational higher education, EFL speaking instruction often remains limited to form-focused and decontextualized practices, resulting in low fluency, confidence, and professional relevance among students. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates Bispro Talk, an English learning framework designed to enhance students' oral communication skills through vocationally oriented and interactive learning activities. Grounded in communicative competence theory, socio-constructivism, and task-based language teaching, Bispro Talk integrates contextual problem-based discussions, professional role-play, interactive speaking tasks, and structured reflective feedback. Employing a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design, the study involved 70 undergraduate students from the S1 Terapan English for Professional and Business Communication Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Lampung. Participants were assigned to an experimental group (n = 35) receiving Bispro Talk instruction and a control group (n = 35) taught using conventional methods over eight instructional sessions. Quantitative data from pre- and post-speaking performance tests were analyzed using paired and independent samples t-tests, while qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations were examined through thematic analysis. The findings revealed statistically significant post-test improvements in the experimental group across all speaking dimensions' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and comprehensibility with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.84). Qualitative results further indicated increased speaking confidence, reduced anxiety, and strong learner preference for professionally relevant speaking tasks. The study concludes that Bispro Talk offers an effective pedagogical approach for vocational EFL contexts by promoting authentic, learner-centered oral communication aligned with workplace communication demands.
**Keywords:** *Bispro Talk; oral communication skills; English Language Teaching (ELT); task based language teaching.*

## INTRODUCTION

Oral communication competence has long been recognized as a central objective in the field of English language education, particularly within higher education contexts where students are expected to engage in academic, professional, and intercultural communication (Thi & Que, 2025; Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Shi et al., 2024). In applied linguistics and English language teaching (ELT), oral communication is not merely understood as the ability to produce grammatically correct utterances, but as the capacity to negotiate meaning, respond appropriately in interaction, and convey ideas fluently and confidently in authentic communicative situations (Ragab et al., 2025; Batubara et al., 2024; Williyan et al., 2025). Consequently, the development of students' oral communication skills is increasingly framed as a complex pedagogical challenge that requires learning models grounded in communicative theory, contextual relevance, and learner engagement (Saha et al., 2023; Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, communicative competence theory, as initially conceptualized by Canale & Swain (2018) and later expanded by Becerra-Posada et al. (2022), provides a

foundational framework for understanding oral communication as an integration of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. This framework is further reinforced by socio constructivist learning theory, which posits that language development emerges through meaningful social interaction and collaborative knowledge construction (Yang et al., 2024; Bahufite et al., 2023). Within this view, speaking proficiency cannot be effectively fostered through isolated drills or decontextualized practice, but must be cultivated through interaction-rich learning environments that encourage negotiation of meaning, role-taking, and reflective feedback (Jin, 2023; Qassrawi et al., 2024; Yuan, 2020). Task based language teaching (TBLT) and experiential learning theories similarly emphasize the importance of purposeful speaking tasks that mirror real-world communication demands, particularly in professional and academic domains (Mahmud et al., 2023; Miftahul Jannah et al., 2025; Diaz et al., 2023).

Despite these well established theoretical foundations, empirical studies continue to report persistent gaps between pedagogical ideals and classroom realities (Coimbra et al., 2020; Susanto et al., 2020; Torky & Ahmed, 2025). In many higher education English classrooms, especially in contexts where English functions as a foreign language, speaking instruction remains dominated by teacher centered explanations, limited student talk time, and assessment practices that prioritize linguistic accuracy over communicative effectiveness (Adi et al., 2025; Yulistra et al., 2025; Prabowo & Saptiany, 2024). As a result, students often demonstrate adequate receptive skills yet exhibit low confidence, limited fluency, and reluctance to participate in oral interaction (We, 2020; Thi & Que, 2025; Ceballos et al., 2020). These conditions suggest a misalignment between existing instructional practices and the theoretical requirement for interaction driven, contextually meaningful speaking development (Miftahul Jannah et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2024; Gomathi et al., 2023).

In response to this pedagogical tension, recent scholarship has increasingly called for innovative learning models that integrate communicative theory with contextualized and professionally oriented speaking practices (Ngatmini et al., 2025; Suryani et al., 2022; Setyaningrum et al., 2022). Such models are expected not only to facilitate linguistic output but also to create structured opportunities for interaction, role enactment, and reflective learning (Raskova Octaberlina & Fitri Anggarini, 2024). Within this emerging discourse, the Bispro Talk learning model is proposed as an instructional approach that systematically combines contextual problem-based discussion, interactive speaking tasks, professional role-play, and reflective feedback mechanisms (Saha et al., 2023; Haq, 2024; Kaharuddin & Rahmadana, 2020). Conceptually, Bispro Talk positions oral communication as a process-oriented skill developed through iterative interaction rather than as a product of isolated performance (Pontillas, 2020; Al Awlaqi & Ghozali, 2023; Ragab et al., 2025).

The instructional process embedded in the Bispro Talk model emphasizes active learner participation, peer interaction, and situated communication practices that simulate authentic communicative contexts. By foregrounding professional and problem based speaking scenarios, the model aligns with experiential and task based learning principles while addressing the affective dimensions of speaking, such as confidence and willingness to communicate. However, as an emerging pedagogical model, Bispro Talk requires empirical validation to substantiate its theoretical claims and to determine its effectiveness in developing students' oral communication skills in higher education settings.

Current literature reveals a notable gap in empirical research that systematically examines newly developed, context driven English learning models with explicit grounding in communicative and socio constructivist theories (Fadilah et al., 2024; Ouyang et al., 2024; Darmaliana et al., 2020). While numerous studies have explored task-based or communicative approaches in general, fewer have investigated structured models that integrate professional discourse, interactive speaking cycles, and reflective feedback within a coherent instructional framework. This gap underscores the need for research that not only measures learning outcomes but also contributes conceptually to the ongoing refinement of speaking pedagogy in ELT.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate Bispro Talk as an innovative English learning model for developing students' oral communication skills. By situating the model within established communicative and socio constructivist theories and empirically examining its impact on students' speaking performance, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on innovative speaking instruction in higher education (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Specifically,

it addresses the need for theoretically informed, empirically tested learning models that bridge the gap between communicative theory and classroom practice in English language education.

## METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effectiveness of the Bispro Talk learning model in developing students' oral communication skills (Gupta & Goel, 2022; Neuman, 2019; Guetterman & Perez, 2023). The use of a quasi-experimental design was methodologically justified by the natural constraints of educational contexts, where random assignment of participants is often impractical (Cheng et al., 2025; Shahnazi et al., 2021; Rogers & Revesz, 2019). (From a theoretical perspective, this design aligns with applied linguistics research that examines pedagogical interventions in authentic classroom environments while maintaining a reasonable degree of causal inference (Lin & Bollen, 2025; Yang & Kyun, 2022).

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to ensure that learning outcomes were examined not only through measurable performance gains but also through an in-depth understanding of instructional processes, learner engagement, and affective responses during the intervention (Pratt, 2020; Lee-Cultura et al., 2022; Yasser A. Ali, Emad Mahrous Awwad, Muna Al-Razgan, 2023).

The study implemented a non-equivalent control group design, involving two intact classes with comparable academic backgrounds and English proficiency levels. One class served as the experimental group and received instruction through the Bispro Talk learning model, while the other functioned as the control group and received conventional English speaking instruction. This comparative structure enabled the attribution of observed learning gains to the instructional model rather than to extraneous variables.

The participants consisted of 70 undergraduate students enrolled in the S1 Terapan English for Professional and Business Communication Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Lampung. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with similarity in initial English proficiency as the primary criterion. This sampling strategy was grounded in the assumption that early-stage university students constitute a critical population for examining oral communication development, as they often experience limited speaking confidence and restricted exposure to authentic communicative practice.

Baseline equivalence between the experimental and control groups was confirmed through pre-test analysis, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the study.

The independent variable of the study was the Bispro Talk learning model, conceptualized as an instructional framework integrating contextual problem-based discussion, interactive speaking tasks, professional role-play, and structured reflective feedback. The dependent variable was students' oral communication skills, operationalized through five dimensions: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and comprehensibility. These dimensions were derived from communicative competence theory and established speaking assessment frameworks, ensuring conceptual alignment between construct definition and measurement.

To address the issue of replicability, the Bispro Talk intervention is described in detail below. The instructional treatment was implemented over eight sessions (each lasting approximately 100 minutes) and followed a consistent pedagogical structure.

Each Bispro Talk session consisted of four main stages:

Contextual Problem Orientation. Each session began with the presentation of a professionally relevant communicative problem (e.g., business meetings, service negotiations, professional presentations). These scenarios were designed to reflect authentic workplace communication demands and to activate learners' prior knowledge.

Interactive Speaking Tasks. Students engaged in pair or small-group speaking activities that required negotiation of meaning, idea exchange, and collaborative problem-solving. Tasks emphasized spontaneous oral production rather than memorized performance.

Professional Role-Play Practice. Learners performed role-play simulations based on vocational contexts, such as client–staff interactions or team discussions. These activities allowed students to practice functional language use, discourse strategies, and professional pragmatics in a low-risk environment.

Structured Reflection and Feedback. Each session concluded with guided reflection and feedback. Feedback was provided by the lecturer and peers, focusing on both linguistic performance and communicative effectiveness.

Reflection prompts encouraged students to evaluate their strengths, difficulties, and learning progress.

AI-mediated practice was integrated as a supportive formative tool, enabling students to rehearse speaking tasks outside class and receive immediate, non-evaluative feedback. Importantly, AI use did not replace teacher instruction or peer interaction but functioned as an additional practice resource to enhance confidence and autonomy.

Data were collected using three primary instruments (Mauliddiyah, 2021; Susanto et al., 2023). First, a speaking performance test was administered as both a pre-test and post-test. The test consisted of structured speaking tasks aligned with the instructional objectives and was assessed using an analytic speaking rubric adapted from established frameworks. Content validity was established through expert judgment (Yundayani et al., 2023; Dunifa, 2023). Two independent raters scored the performances, and inter-rater reliability was confirmed prior to analysis.

Second, a classroom observation checklist was used to document learner participation, interaction patterns, and communicative behaviors during the intervention. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students from the experimental group to explore learning experiences, perceptions of the model, and challenges encountered during speaking development (Kvale, 2021).

The research followed a systematic sequence beginning with problem identification and literature review, followed by research design selection, participant recruitment, and instrument development and validation. Both groups completed a speaking pre-test prior to the intervention. The experimental group then received eight sessions of Bispro Talk instruction, while the control group underwent conventional speaking instruction emphasizing textbook-based activities and teacher-led interaction. Classroom observations were conducted throughout the intervention to ensure instructional fidelity. After the intervention, both groups completed a speaking post-test, followed by interviews with experimental group participants.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests. Paired-sample t-tests examined within-group differences, while independent-sample t-tests compared post-test scores between groups. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d. Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving coding, categorization, and interpretation. Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled methodological triangulation and enhanced analytical robustness.

All research procedures adhered to ethical standards. Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from all participants, confidentiality was maintained, and participation was voluntary with the right to withdraw at any stage without academic consequences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Quantitative results*

The quantitative analysis indicates that students who received instruction through the Bispro Talk learning model demonstrated significantly greater improvement in oral communication skills compared to those who received conventional instruction.

Table 1. *Comparison of pre-test and post-test speaking scores between experimental and control groups*

| Group | *N* | Test | Mean (*M*) | *SD* | *t* (df) | *p* | Cohen's *d* | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental (BISPRO TALK) | 35 | Pre-test | 62.40 | 6.85 | 12.94(34) | < .001 | 1.84 | Significant |
| | | Post-test | 81.73 | 5.92 | | | | |
| Control (Traditional) | 35 | Pre-test | 61.85 | 7.10 | 3.87(34) | < .01 | 0.42 | Significant (small gain) |
| | | Post-test | 69.12 | 6.44 | | | | |

Table 2. *Component-wise comparison of experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test scores*

| Speaking Component | Group | Pre-test *M*(*SD*) | Post-test *M*(*SD*) | Mean Gain | *t*(df) | *p* value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pronunciation | Experimental | 12.1 (2.3) | 16.8 (1.9) | +4.7 | 9.21(34) | < .001 | Significant |
| | Control | 12.0 (2.4) | 13.2 (2.2) | +1.2 | 1.85(34) | > .05 | Not significant |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fluency | Experimental | 12.3 (2.5) | 16.9 (2.0) | +4.6 | 8.97(34) | < .001 | Significant |
| | Control | 12.2 (2.6) | 13.4 (2.3) | +1.2 | 1.79(34) | > .05 | Not significant |
| Accuracy | Experimental | 11.9 (2.1) | 16.2 (1.8) | +4.3 | 8.42(34) | < .001 | Significant |
| | Control | 11.8 (2.2) | 12.9 (2.0) | +1.1 | 1.72(34) | > .05 | Not significant |
| Vocabulary Use | Experimental | 12.4 (2.4) | 16.7 (2.1) | +4.3 | 8.65(34) | < .001 | Significant |
| | Control | 12.3 (2.5) | 13.5 (2.2) | +1.2 | 1.81(34) | > .05 | Not significant |
| Comprehensibility | Experimental | 12.7 (2.2) | 16.9 (1.7) | +4.2 | 8.33(34) | < .001 | Significant |
| | Control | 12.6 (2.3) | 13.7 (2.1) | +1.1 | | | |

As presented in Table 1, both groups showed comparable baseline proficiency prior to the intervention. The experimental group obtained a mean pre-test score of 62.40 (SD = 6.85), while the control group achieved a mean of 61.85 (SD = 7.10). An independent-samples t-test confirmed that this difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), indicating equivalence between groups at the outset of the study.

Following the instructional intervention, the experimental group exhibited a substantial increase in speaking performance, achieving a post-test mean score of 81.73 (SD = 5.92), representing a mean gain of 19.33 points. A paired-samples t-test revealed that this improvement was statistically significant, $t(34) = 12.94$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.84$). In contrast, the control group showed a more modest improvement, with post-test scores increasing to a mean of 69.12 (SD = 6.44), yielding a gain of 7.27 points. Although this improvement was statistically significant, $t(34) = 3.87$, $p < .01$, the corresponding effect size ($d = 0.42$) indicated only a small practical impact.

To further examine the comparative effectiveness of the two instructional approaches, an independent-samples t-test was conducted on post-test scores. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference favoring the experimental group ($p < .001$), confirming that students taught using Bispro Talk outperformed those receiving traditional instruction.

A component-wise analysis of speaking performance using an oral proficiency rubric adapted to a 20-point scale provided additional insight into the nature of these gains (see Table 2). The experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements across all assessed components. The largest gains were observed in pronunciation (M gain = +4.7, $t(34) = 9.21$, $p < .001$) and fluency (M gain = +4.6, $t(34) = 8.97$, $p < .001$), followed by grammatical accuracy (+4.3, $t(34) = 8.42$, $p < .001$), vocabulary use (+4.3, $t(34) = 8.65$, $p < .001$), and comprehensibility (+4.2, $t(34) = 8.33$, $p < .001$).

In contrast, the control group showed only minimal gains across all speaking components (mean gains < +1.3), none of which reached statistical significance ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that Bispro Talk was particularly effective in enhancing dimensions of oral communication that depend on sustained interaction, contextualized practice, and repeated opportunities for spoken output.

The quantitative results provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the Bispro Talk learning model in improving students' oral communication skills beyond what can be achieved through conventional speaking instruction.

*Qualitative results*

Semi-structured interviews with 70 students from the experimental group yielded rich insights into their experiences with BISPRO TALK. Thematic analysis identified four dominant themes:

Enhanced Speaking Confidence and Reduced Anxiety Students consistently reported feeling more comfortable practicing with BISPRO TALK than in face-to-face classroom settings. The absence of judgment created a psychologically safe space for risk-taking. As one student shared:

> "I felt more comfortable and less nervous because there's no fear of being judged."

Another added:

> "Nobody laughs if I mispronounce. It makes me want to try again."

Technological and Procedural Challenges Despite positive perceptions, students encountered barriers such as unstable internet connectivity, speech-recognition errors (especially with local accents), and limited access to premium features. One noted:

> "Sometimes the AI didn't understand my pronunciation."

Others expressed frustration with usage limits:

> "The free version stops after ten minutes it's too short."

Perceived Authenticity of AI Interaction Opinions varied on how "human-like" the interaction felt. Some described the voice as natural and engaging, while others missed emotional cues:

> "It helps me practice without feeling shy, but it's not as natural as talking to a real person."

Nevertheless, most prioritized psychological safety over emotional realism. Contextual and Pedagogical Suggestions for Vocational Relevance Students emphasized the need for industry aligned scenarios such as customer service dialogues, job interviews, or technical discussions to increase relevance. One suggested:

> "If BISPRO TALK includes topics from our field, it will be easier to learn the right vocabulary."

Others recommended integrated grammar feedback, progress tracking, and extended free usage to sustain engagement.

Collectively, the qualitative data corroborate the quantitative findings, illustrating how BISPRO TALK not only improved linguistic performance but also reshaped learners' affective and motivational orientations toward speaking English.

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that Bispro Talk functions as an effective instructional framework for enhancing oral communication skills in vocational higher education contexts. Rather than merely demonstrating score gains, the results offer insight into *how* and *why* the model facilitated improvement across multiple speaking dimensions. The largest gains observed in fluency and pronunciation suggest that sustained opportunities for contextualized speaking practice and repeated oral output played a central role in learners' development. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies indicating that task-based and interaction-oriented speaking instruction significantly improves fluency and phonological control in EFL learners (Nation & Newton, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with communicative competence theory (Canale & Swain, 2018), which conceptualizes speaking proficiency as an integration of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. Empirical research has shown that instructional models grounded in communicative competence are more effective in promoting functional speaking ability than form-focused approaches (Byram, 2020). By situating speaking tasks within professionally relevant scenarios, Bispro Talk enabled learners to engage in language use that was not only linguistically accurate but also pragmatically appropriate and discourse-oriented. This helps explain the significant gains in comprehensibility and vocabulary use, echoing findings from vocational EFL studies emphasizing workplace-oriented task design (Hyland, 2019).

The effectiveness of Bispro Talk can also be interpreted through the lens of socio-constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes knowledge construction through social interaction and collaborative meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978). Previous studies have demonstrated that collaborative speaking tasks and peer interaction enhance learners' willingness to communicate and depth of oral production (Marduqi & Prihananto, 2021). In line with these findings, the present study revealed that structured peer interaction and reflective feedback fostered a sense of psychological safety, enabling learners to take communicative risks without fear of negative evaluation. Such conditions are known to lower the affective filter and facilitate oral language development.

Although AI-supported practice was incorporated into the intervention, its role remained supplementary rather than central. This finding aligns with recent research suggesting that AI-mediated speaking tools are most effective when used as formative support rather than as standalone instructional solutions (Dakhil et al., 2025). Students' perceptions of AI as a low-pressure rehearsal tool parallel earlier studies

indicating that automated feedback systems can increase practice frequency and learner autonomy, particularly for fluency development (Hamka et al., 2021). However, consistent with prior research, limitations related to emotional responsiveness and contextual sensitivity underscore the continued importance of teacher mediation.

The substantial effect size observed in the experimental group further supports earlier findings that communicative, task-based models yield stronger learning outcomes than traditional teacher-centered instruction (Widiastuti et al., 2022). Conventional approaches that prioritize accuracy and controlled drills may restrict opportunities for authentic interaction, whereas models like Bispro Talk facilitate meaningful language use and sustained engagement key factors in developing professional speaking competence.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size and single-institution context limit generalizability, a concern similarly noted in previous quasi-experimental EFL studies (Rogers & Revesz, 2019). Technological constraints, including internet instability and accent sensitivity in speech-recognition tools, reflect challenges reported in other technology-enhanced language learning research. Additionally, the short intervention period restricts conclusions regarding long-term skill retention.

Future research should involve larger, multi-institutional samples and longitudinal designs to examine sustained impacts on professional communication skills. Comparative studies exploring different levels of AI integration ranging from AI-assisted to fully teacher-facilitated instruction would further clarify optimal pedagogical configurations. Collaboration with industry stakeholders may also support the development of field-specific Bispro Talk modules, aligning EFL instruction more closely with workplace communication demands.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that Bispro Talk is an effective instructional framework for improving EFL students' oral communication skills in higher vocational education. The findings indicate that students who participated in Bispro Talk demonstrated statistically significant improvements across key speaking dimensions, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and comprehensibility. In addition, qualitative data suggest that the model contributes to increased speaking confidence and reduced anxiety by offering structured, interactive, and professionally relevant speaking activities.

The role of AI in this study functioned as a supportive component that facilitated additional low-pressure speaking practice and formative feedback. While students generally perceived AI-mediated activities as helpful, the findings also highlight the importance of maintaining teacher guidance and peer interaction to ensure meaningful communication and equitable learning experiences. Therefore, AI should be viewed as a complementary tool rather than a central element of the Bispro Talk framework.

Based on the scope of this small-scale, quasi-experimental study, the implications of Bispro Talk are limited to similar vocational higher education contexts. Nevertheless, the model shows potential for practical application when supported by adequate digital infrastructure and lecturer readiness. Future research is recommended to examine the long-term effects of Bispro Talk, explore its adaptability in other vocational settings, and investigate variations in instructional support, including different levels of technology integration. Overall, Bispro Talk demonstrates how a theoretically grounded and context-sensitive approach can support the development of students' professional speaking competence.

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