Optimizing Poster Media for Speaking Micro Skills at Gontor Islamic Teacher Training Students

Aries Fachriza*[1], Alya Fitroh Andriyani[2], Eka Indah Nuraini[3], Dinar Dipta[4], Dian Nashrul Munif[5]

[1,2,3,4,5] Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia
aries.fachriza@unida.gontor.ac.id*; [2]alyaandriyani31@gmail.com; [3]ekaindahnuraini@unida.gontor.ac.id; [4]dinardipta@unida.gontor.ac.id; [5]dian_munif@unida.gontor.id
*Corresponding author

Abstract. The mastery of speaking micro-skills, particularly grammatical accuracy, is essential for students in Islamic boarding schools to achieve effective communication. However, traditional approaches often lack interactive learning support. This study evaluates the effectiveness of poster media in improving students' speaking proficiency through the Monday Talk Program at ITTC Darussalam Gontor. A quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design was implemented, with participants selected through purposive sampling based on similar proficiency levels and the availability of intact classes. The experimental group received poster-based instruction, while the control group used mind mapping. Pre-test and post-test scores were collected to measure learning gains. The results show a significant improvement (p = 0.000) in the experimental group, indicating that poster media effectively enhance grammatical accuracy in speaking. These findings suggest that integrating visual media into structured speaking programs supports more engaging and effective learning. In conclusion, poster media represent a valuable instructional tool for strengthening students' grammatical proficiency in Islamic boarding school contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is considered the most important language proficiency, especially in English, as it signifies a high level of language competence (Usman & Erdiana, 2017). Language symbolizes the honor and pride of the Modern Islamic Institution Darussalam Gontor. Language discipline at Modern Islamic Institution Darussalam Gontor is always enforced by implementing two Arabic weeks and two English weeks. Since its establishment,

Gontor has prioritized the gradual integration of both Arabic and English into its curriculum. Classroom instruction actively utilizes both languages, strategically incorporating them into lessons to enhance students' language proficiency (Zarkasyi et al., 2022). The textbooks used are also in Arabic and English and are not translated into Indonesian. This approach aligns with what Gontor calls "*tariqah mubasyirah*" or the direct method, which emphasizes language immersion.

This study intended to examine use of poster platform in teaching micro skills of speaking, specifically focusing on the accurate use of grammatical structures such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other parts of speech within sentences. Micro-skills are essential for effective speaking as they provide the necessary tools to communicate clearly, improve fluency and confidence, enhance comprehension during interaction, and facilitate appropriate social interaction. Micro-skills support continuous effective learning and provide a solid foundation for achieving higher language proficiency (Royani & Tukimun, 2023).

The use of direct method was assumed as a natural language acquisition rather than relying on translation, starting from grade 2. In the first grade, some lessons are still presented using Indonesian. Arabic lessons, which use the book "*Durusu al-Lughoh al-'Arabiyah*"a book containing Arabic language improvement exercises by K.H Imam Zarkasyi and H. Imam Syubani must be delivered in Arabic, just as English lessons are taught in English. Thus, the direct method plays a crucial role in the educational practices of ITTC Gontor. This method is traditionally used alongside various other teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes. Although lecturing remains the primary method, it is often combined with other learning strategies. Moreover, dynamic learning environment can be achieved by integrating lecture-style teaching with project-based and problem-based learning(We, 2020). An integrative approach encourages critical thinking and active student engagement.

While various studies have explored the effectiveness of different teaching methodologies in speaking skills, limited research has specifically examined the impact of poster media in enhancing micro skills on speaking within a direct-method learning environment. Most previous studies have focused on general speaking skills (Al-Murtadha, 2021; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). or the effectiveness of media such as videos and podcasts (Lei et al., 2022). However, research on the role of visual aids like posters in developing micro-skills on speaking remains scarce (Pateşan et al., 2018). This study addresses this gap by analysing how poster media can aid students in mastering grammar structures and fluency within direct-method instruction.

This research lies in its focus on integrating poster media as a tool for improving micro skills of speaking especially on grammar competencies. Unlike previous studies that primarily investigated broader speaking skills or relied on multimedia tools, this study emphasizes the role of visual learning through posters. By providing a structured framework for grammar reinforcement and fluency development, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on innovative pedagogical approaches in language learning. The integration of multimodal learning tools has shown significant improvement in students' speaking fluency and accuracy, reinforcing the need for alternative teaching media such as posters (Guo et al., 2023).

Recent research has highlighted various methodologies to enhance speaking proficiency. In addition, task-based instruction enhances EFL learners' speaking skills (Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018). Moreover, the effects of podcast-based language learning on speaking fluency and pronunciation accuracy (Fachriza et al., 2023). Additionally, mobile - assisted language learning influences EFL learners' speaking proficiency the impact of active learning strategy on students' speaking confidence in Indonesian EFL classrooms (Moayeri & Khodareza, 2020; Pajrini & Mubaidillah, 2023). Furthermore, recent studies such as significance of visual learning aids in fostering speaking engagement and comprehension (Qasserras, 2024). A study also highlighted how combining visual tools with task-based activities could significantly enhance students' speaking confidence and syntactic complexity (Xuyen & Trang, 2021).

This study also aims to bridge the research gap and provide insights into how visual learning through posters can be an effective strategy for enhancing micro skills on speaking in a direct-method environment. By doing so, it contributes to the advancement of language teaching methodologies and supports educators in developing more effective speaking instruction strategies. Considering the growing importance of visual learning tools, integrating posters as a medium for direct-method language instruction offers a unique opportunity to reinforce linguistic structures while encouraging active engagement and communicative competence. This aligns with recent findings by Ishaka Putra et al.,(2023) who demonstrated that integrating structured visual input into second language acquisition leads to improved long-term speaking proficiency and grammatical accuracy.

By addressing these aspects, this study not only provides an innovative perspective on teaching speaking skills but also aligns with contemporary research emphasizing the effectiveness of alternative learning tools in language acquisition. In language learning, the selection of appropriate teaching media plays a crucial role in fostering students' speaking abilities. ITTC Darussalam Gontor has implemented the Monday's Talk Program as a structured initiative to enhance students' speaking performance. However, the most effective media for fostering micro skills on speaking within this context remain underexplored. While poster media offers visual reinforcement that aids in grammatical accuracy and fluency, mind mapping is widely used for organizing ideas and facilitating structured speech production. This raises an important question: Does the use of poster media lead to higher micro-speaking skill development than mind mapping among 6th-grade students at ITTC Darussalam Gontor in the context of the Monday's Talk Program? Investigating this issue will provide valuable insights into the comparative effectiveness of these two visual learning tools and inform future pedagogical decisions.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative method using a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of poster media in examining the micro skills on speaking of 6th-grade students at ITTC Gontor within the Monday's Talk Program. Experimental research is designed to determine causal relationships between independent and dependent variables by systematically manipulating an intervention (treatment) while controlling extraneous factors (Creswell & David Creswell, 2018). It explains that quasi-experimental research is

applied when random assignment is not feasible, yet it allows researcher to measure the effect of an intervention with a controlled experimental structure. In this study, the independent variable was the instructional method poster media in the experimental group and mind mapping in the control group. The dependent variable was the students' micro-skill on speaking development, particularly in *grammatical accuracy*. The study aimed to investigate whether poster media provides a more effective instructional strategy than mind mapping in fostering students' speaking proficiency. The study followed a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design, where participants were assigned to either the experimental or control group based on predefined criteria. The participants were selected using a *purposive sampling technique*, in which classes were chosen based on predetermined criteria set by the school. These criteria included similar English proficiency levels, the same grade level, and the availability of intact classes that could serve as the experimental and control groups. Because the school did not allow random reassignment of students across classes, the existing classes were used as intact groups, which aligns with the non-equivalent control group design commonly used in quasi-experimental research (Isnawan & Muhamad Galang, 2020). This sampling approach ensured that both groups shared comparable characteristics prior to the treatment.

The experimental group was taught using poster media, an approach that integrates visual learning elements to aid comprehension and retention of grammatical structures in speaking. Meanwhile, the control group utilized mind mapping, a strategy that involves organizing ideas graphically to enhance understanding and speech fluency

Table 1. Treatment design in experiment and control group

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	O_1	X_1	O_2
Control Group	O_1	$X2$	O_2

Note:
O_1: Pretest
O_2: Post-test
X_1: Treatment used Visual Media Poster
X_2: Treatment used media mind mapping

Both groups underwent pre-test and post-test assessments to measure their progress in micro skills on speaking. The pre-test was administered before the intervention to assess the students' baseline speaking abilities, while the post-test evaluated their improvement after the instructional treatments were applied.

The research instrument was a speaking test, which assessed students' grammatical *accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, and coherence* in spoken English. The test was designed to align with the objectives of the Monday's Talk Program, which focuses on structured oral practice for developing academic speaking proficiency.

The data collection process involved administering the pre-test to both groups before the treatment. The experimental group then received instruction using poster media, where students engaged in visual-based learning activities, such as analysing key grammatical patterns displayed on posters and using them in guided speaking exercises. In contrast, the control group was taught through mind mapping, where they structured and organized their spoken responses based on concept maps. Following the intervention, a post-test was conducted to measure the students' speaking progress.

To determine whether poster media is more effective than mind mapping for improving students' grammar in speaking, we tested the following hypotheses:

- H0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference between using poster media and mind mapping on students' grammar in speaking.
- Ha (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant difference between using poster media and mind mapping on students' grammar in speaking.

The study involved a speaking test with two groups:
- Control Group (6B): Used mind mapping
- Experimental Group (6C): Used poster media

We set the significance level at $\alpha = 5\%$. The decision rule:
- If Sig. (2-tailed) > 5%, we accept H0 (no significant difference).
- If Sig. (2-tailed) < 5%, we reject H0 and accept Ha (significant difference)

FINDINGS

This study examined the impact of poster media in optimizing students' micro-skills in speaking. The research was conducted on 6th-grade students at ITTC Gontor with an experimental group (6C) and a control group (6B). The study analyzed pre-test and post-test scores to determine the impact of the intervention. The results are explained as follows:

Improvement in Speaking Micro-Skills

The results indicate a significant improvement in students' speaking skills in the experimental group. The pre-test and post-test scores show a notable difference between the two groups. The experimental group (6C) initially had a total pre-test score of 980, which increased to 1630 in the post-test, showing an improvement of 650 points. In contrast, the control group (6B) only improved by 10 points, from 1410 to 1420.

Table 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores Comparison

Class	Pre-Test Total Score	Post-Test Total Score	Score Increase	Improvement Percentage
6C (Experimental)	980	1630	**+650**	**66.33%**
6B (Control)	1410	1420	**+10**	**0.71%**

These results revealed that the use of poster media had a more substantial effect on students' speaking skills compared to mind-mapping techniques. Further analysis of individual scores highlights that many students in the experimental group moved from lower proficiency levels to higher ones. Before the intervention, several students were categorized as "less" or "fair" in their speaking proficiency. However, after the use of posters, a significant number of them improved to "good" and "very good" categories. This suggests that poster media is not only effective in enhancing overall scores but also in shifting students toward higher levels of proficiency.

Statistical Significance of Poster Media Effectiveness

To validate the effectiveness of poster media, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results showed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 threshold for significance. This means that the improvement observed in the experimental group was statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that poster media positively influenced students' speaking micro-skills.

Additionally, the homogeneity test revealed that both groups started with similar variances, confirming that the differences observed in the post-test were due to the intervention rather than pre-existing disparities. This strengthens the conclusion that poster media played a key role in improving students' speaking abilities.

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores for both groups highlight the effectiveness of poster media. The experimental group demonstrated a sharp increase in scores, while the control group showed only minimal progress. This indicates that visual learning through posters is more impactful in developing speaking skills than traditional methods such as mind mapping. The experimental group's higher improvement can be attributed to the engaging nature of posters, which facilitated better comprehension and retention. Moreover, the structured presentation of grammar rules and vocabulary on posters likely contributed to improved speaking accuracy and fluency.

To analyse the data, this study was calculated by Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric statistical test used when the data distribution is non-normal (Hesse et al., 2018). This test was chosen because the collected data did not meet the normality assumption required for parametric tests such as the t-test. The Mann-Whitney U test compares the differences between two independent groups by ranking their scores and determining whether the distribution of scores significantly differs. The statistical analysis aimed to determine whether the experimental group (poster media) exhibited a statistically significant improvement in micro-speaking skills compared to the control group (mind mapping). A significance value of p = 0.000 was used as the threshold for determining whether the intervention had a meaningful impact on students' speaking performance.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test Results

Test	Value
Mann-Whitney U	95.500
Wilcoxon W	348.500

Test	Value
Z	-3.540
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**0.000**

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on visual learning strategies in language acquisition. By exploring the effectiveness of poster media in an Islamic boarding school context, this study provides empirical evidence on how visual instructional tools can enhance students' grammatical accuracy and speaking proficiency.
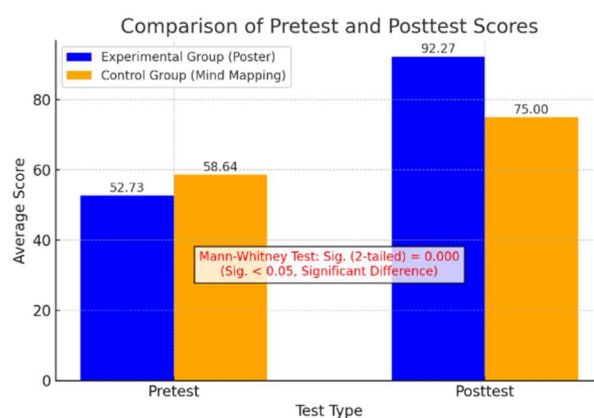

Figure 1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest

The findings of this study indicate that the use of posters as a learning resource significantly enhances students' micro-skills in speaking. The results showed a notable improvement in the experimental group, with their average pretest score increasing from 52.73 to 92.27, while the control group experienced a smaller improvement from 58.64 to 75.00. The Mann-Whitney analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of posters, as the Asymp. Sig 2-tailed value of 0.000 was lower than the 5% significance level, demonstrating a statistically significant impact.

DISCUSSION

The findings strongly support the use of poster media for the students as an effective learning tool for improving students' speaking micro-skills in *pesantren* milieu. Several factors contribute to this effectiveness: First, Visual stimulation and comprehension are integral to language learning, as they facilitate cognitive processing and enhance students' ability to internalize new information. The human brain processes visual and verbal information through distinct but interconnected channels (Wong & Samudra, 2021). This suggests that combining visual aids with spoken input can reinforce learning by activating multiple cognitive pathways. Similarly, learners acquire and retain information more

effectively when presented with both verbal and visual stimuli, as this reduces cognitive overload and enhances meaningful learning (Mayer, 2024).

Posters, as a form of visual aid, provide clear and structured representations that support students in understanding linguistic concepts. They serve as external memory aids, allowing students to revisit essential information, which facilitates recall and retention. Unlike mind-mapping, which emphasizes conceptual connections and abstract organization, posters present systematically arranged information that is easy to reference. This structured approach is particularly useful in speaking activities, where students often struggle with fluency and accuracy due to limited linguistic resources.

Research suggests that visual aids improve listening comprehension, particularly in spoken activities, by providing contextual cues that support meaning-making (Febriani et al., 2022; Khoiriyah et al., 2024) . Visual supports, such as posters, help learners decode spoken discourse by reinforcing key vocabulary, grammar structures, and discourse markers (Thi & Chung, 2023). In second language acquisition (SLA), Speaking fluency is closely linked to a learner's ability to access stored linguistic knowledge rapidly(Uchihara & Clenton, 2023). Posters, in addition, act as scaffolding tools, reducing cognitive load and allowing learners to focus on language production (van Nooijen et al., 2024). By integrating visual aids into speaking exercises, educators can enhance students' confidence, comprehension, and overall communicative competence, making the learning process more effective and engaging.

Second, Posters encourage active student participation and contribute to the development of micro skills of speaking (Hidayati, 2025), such as grammar mastery, pronunciation, fluency, and discourse organization. Unlike traditional teacher-centered methods that often emphasize rote memorization, poster-based activities foster student-centered learning, allowing learners to engage in discussions, collaborate with peers, and construct linguistic knowledge through interaction(Coşkun & Eker, 2018). Speaking involves various micro skills, including the ability to use grammatical structures accurately, produce intelligible pronunciation, and maintain fluency in spontaneous speech (D. Brown, 2004). Posters provide structured and contextualized input that reinforces these micro skills. For instance, grammatical mastery a crucial component of speaking can be strengthened through visual reinforcement of sentence patterns and syntactic structures (Sauppe & Flecken, 2021). It was helping learners internalize rules and apply them in communicative contexts (Al Aqad et al., 2021). By consistently referring to the structured layout of posters, students can enhance their syntactic accuracy, reducing common errors in tense, word order, and agreement.

Furthermore, Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2024) truly emphasizes that visual aids enhance retention and cognitive processing, making it easier for students to recall linguistic structures during spoken interactions. Posters also support the phonological aspects of speaking, such as intonation, stress, and pronunciation, by providing visual cues for articulation and rhythm (Himmayati & Triyoko, 2024). This is particularly useful for second-language learners who struggle with phonetic accuracy.

By integrating posters into speaking exercises, educators create an interactive and supportive learning environment where students can actively develop their micro skills, leading to improved fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative competence(Richards, 1990). The findings indicate that the use of posters as visual scaffolding significantly

enhances students' confidence and fluency, particularly in *pesantren*-based learning environments, where English speaking skills are often developed through collaborative and interactive activities. Confidence building and reduced speaking anxiety were observed in the experimental group, where students using posters demonstrated greater fluency and grammatical accuracy due to the presence of structured visual references(Kaur et al., 2023). This aligns with (H. D. Brown, 2004) that micro skills of speaking, which emphasize the importance of grammatical mastery in spoken language, including the ability to construct syntactically correct sentences in real-time communication.

Grammar mastery in speaking involves spontaneous and accurate retrieval of linguistic structures, a challenge that many students in *pesantren* encounter due to limited exposure to communicative English settings. Posters function as scaffolding tools, enabling students to internalize grammar rules by providing structured examples of sentence patterns, verb conjugations, and discourse markers. This reduces hesitation and grammatical errors, as students can visually reference correct syntactic structures while formulating their speech. In contrast, the control group, which employed mind-mapping techniques, showed improvement but lacked the immediate grammatical support that posters provided, leading to less structured spoken output.

Peer interaction is essential for developing speaking microskills. In *pesantren* settings, where learning is deeply rooted in collaborative knowledge construction, posters facilitate peer-assisted learning, allowing students to correct each other's grammatical mistakes, refine their sentence structures, and practice speaking in a non-threatening and engaging environment (Harsono et al., 2019). This interactive learning model fosters grammatical accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative competence, which are essential for students in *pesantren* aiming to master academic and real-world English speaking. The study provides strong evidence that poster media significantly enhances students' speaking micro-skills. The experimental group exhibited remarkable improvement compared to the control group, with statistical analysis confirming the effectiveness of the intervention. The ability of posters to present information visually, facilitate structured learning, and encourage participation makes them a valuable tool in language education.

Moreover, posters are an effective teaching tool for language arts activities, by putting attractive pictures in front of the class, it can make it easier for teachers to bring visual interest into the classroom which can create effectiveness in language learning(Hubenthal et al., 2011) . Offering a variety of benefits that make learning more engaging and interactive. students will be more likely to practice speaking, which improves results (Kurniawan,2022). Using visuals such as pictures and diagrams, helps students understand context, reduce anxiety, and improve retention. They encourage creativity by presenting real-life scenarios that prompt learners to construct dialogues and practice speaking with greater confidence (Fitriani & Zulkarnain, 2019)

Several studies have revealed the frequency and types of grammatical errors that hinder effective communication; by emphasizing essential grammar rules and providing clear prompts, posters guide students in forming correct sentences while encouraging collaboration through group discussion and teamwork. They also connect speaking practice to practical, real-world situations and increase student engagement with their visually appealing and interactive nature. Posters appeal to different learning styles by combining

visual, auditory, and physical elements, and are equally valuable to teachers in delivering structured and adaptable lessons. Their versatility and reusability make them a cost-effective way to support meaningful, student-centered language learning.

These findings suggest that educators should consider incorporating visual-based learning strategies to improve language acquisition and student engagement. The study also highlights the potential of interactive and student-centered learning approaches in improving speaking skills. Overall, this study underscores the potential of posters as an effective teaching tool in improving students' speaking micro-skills. Educators are encouraged to integrate posters into their instructional strategies to foster a more interactive and communicative language learning environment. On the contrary to what is expected, currently, there are many foreign language learners (English) who "fail" to master English as a means of communication. That is the fact that happened to the students of ITTC Gontor. Therefore, in mastering English especially in speaking skills, ITTC Gontor holds several language improvement programs both daily and weekly programs, such as the conversation program held every day after *shubuh* prayer, and the Monday's talk program held every week on Monday before maghrib prayer. In the concept of implementation, the conversation program is carried out by dividing students into several groups, while Monday's talk program is carried out in large classes involving all students at Modern Islamic Institution Darussalam Gontor and the teacher is the main role model in delivering the material.

CONCLUSIONS

This study underscores the importance of appropriate instructional methods and media in supporting students' English-speaking development. The findings show that students preferred the Monday's Talk program due to its integration of poster media, which effectively facilitated micro speaking skills through structured visual support and increased engagement. Thus, poster media can serve as a valuable innovation in *pesantren*-based language programs such as Islamic Teacher Training College (ITTC) Gontor. Nonetheless, the study is limited by its quasi-experimental design without randomization, its small sample restricted to a single institution, and the short intervention period. These factors may affect the generalizability and long-term interpretation of the findings. Future researchers are recommended to employ larger and more diverse samples, apply longitudinal designs to observe sustained effects, and compare poster media with other multimodal tools to better determine their relative effectiveness in enhancing speaking proficiency.

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