

The Influence of Tv Show F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Toward English As Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Speaking Skill

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Abstract

This study looks at how Friends, a television program, affects English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' speaking abilities. The study uses qualitative analysis to show how regular comedy viewing improves spoken English confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Friends offers an immersive learning experience that bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application through its organic dialogues, colloquial language, and cultural situations. The main conclusions show that learners' oral ability is greatly enhanced by imitation strategies such as mimicking the speech patterns of actors. The program also lessens speaking fear and promotes cultural knowledge. The study highlights the advantages of integrating real audio-visual materials, but it also points out drawbacks, like the necessity of choosing specific episodes to support learning objectives. The results support the thoughtful inclusion of TV shows like Friends in EFL courses as an additional resource to enhance conventional teaching techniques.

Keywords: *EFL Students, Speaking Skills, FRIENDS TV Program.*

Abstract

Penelitian ini menganalisis pengaruh acara televisi Friends terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian menunjukkan bahwa menonton sitkom ini secara rutin dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, penguasaan kosakata, pelafalan, dan kelancaran dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Dialog alami, bahasa sehari-hari, dan konteks budaya yang disajikan dalam Friends menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang imersif, menjembatani kesenjangan antara pengetahuan akademis dan penerapan praktis. Temuan utama mengungkapkan bahwa teknik meniru, seperti mengikuti pola bicara para aktor, secara signifikan meningkatkan kemampuan lisan pembelajar. Selain itu, acara ini juga berperan dalam mengurangi kecemasan berbicara sekaligus memperkaya pemahaman budaya. Meskipun penelitian menggarisbawahi manfaat penggunaan materi audio-visual autentik, terdapat beberapa keterbatasan yang perlu dipertimbangkan, seperti pentingnya seleksi episode yang sesuai dengan tujuan pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian ini mendukung integrasi yang tepat dari acara televisi seperti Friends ke dalam kurikulum EFL sebagai bahan pendamping untuk melengkapi metode pengajaran konvensional. Dengan demikian, Friends tidak hanya menjadi sarana hiburan, tetapi juga alat pembelajaran yang efektif untuk mengembangkan kompetensi berbahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Pelajar EFL, Kemampuan Berbicara, Program TV FRIENDS*

1. Introduction

Speaking English is becoming progressively more crucial in this globally connected age. In addition to being a universal language, English is also essential for entering a number of industries, including business, technology, and education. Consequently, fluency in English is required for learners to complete in today's international society. In the contemporary globalized world, proficiency in English has become an indispensable asset, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries like Indonesia. Among the four fundamental language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is often perceived as the most challenging to master. This difficulty arises due to the necessity for real-time processing, appropriate vocabulary usage, grammatical

accuracy, and cultural nuances. Traditional classroom settings frequently emphasize grammar and reading comprehension, often at the expense of speaking practice, leading to a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

To bridge this gap, educators and researchers have explored various methodologies to enhance speaking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. One such approach is the incorporation of authentic audio-visual materials, such as television series, into language learning curricula. Television series provide learners with exposure to natural dialogues, colloquial expressions, and cultural contexts, thereby facilitating a more immersive and engaging learning experience. Among the plethora of English-language TV series, the American sitcom *Friends* has garnered significant attention for its potential as a language learning tool.

Television series offer learners exposure to natural dialogues, colloquial expressions, and cultural nuances, thereby fostering a more immersive learning experience. Etikasari (2022) highlight that watching TV series can significantly aid L2 learners in improving their speaking fluency by providing models of natural language use, enhancing vocabulary acquisition, and boosting learners' confidence. Similarly, Niu (2024) emphasizes that American TV series, with their vivid and relatable content, serve as effective tools for enhancing college students' English-speaking abilities. Djanuwarso and Deskilasari (2022) conducted a study focusing on the impact of watching *Friends* and found that consistent exposure to the series improved students' pronunciation, listening comprehension, and grammatical analysis. This suggests that *Friends* can be a valuable asset in enhancing various aspects of English language proficiency.

In a similar vein, Etikasari, Hardiyanti, and Susanti (2022) investigated the role of TV series in improving L2 learners' speaking fluency. Their qualitative research revealed that while TV series were not the primary strategy for attaining fluency, they significantly contributed to learners' motivation, exposure to natural language use, and confidence in speaking. The study emphasized that TV series serve as a supplementary material that complements formal language instruction by providing authentic linguistic input.

Furthermore, the integration of multimedia resources like TV series aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that advocate for authentic and engaging learning materials. Mingboyeveva and Iskandarova (2025) assert that utilizing TV shows and movies in language instruction can significantly improve students' speaking skills by providing contextualized language input and promoting interactive learning environments.

The influence of *Friends* extends beyond vocabulary and grammar. Mudawe (2021) explored the sitcom's role in enhancing EFL students' cultural awareness. The study concluded that sitcoms like *Friends* expose learners to cultural nuances and social norms, which are often absent in traditional textbooks. By engaging with the series, learners develop a better understanding of the target culture, thereby improving their communicative competence in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

The field of second language acquisition has seen a shift in understanding the role of television in language learning. Initially, some developmental psychologists held the view that television viewing did not significantly aid language acquisition, particularly for young viewers. However, this perspective has evolved with growing evidence suggesting that children can indeed learn about language through well-designed television programs featuring engaging dialogue and clear context. This broader understanding now extends to adult language learners, with research indicating that audio-visual media, such as television shows and movies, can serve as effective and engaging tools for language study. This evolution acknowledges that language learning can occur not only through direct interaction but also through indirect exposure to comprehensible language input via media.

Moreover, the accessibility and entertainment value of *Friends* contribute to its effectiveness as a learning tool. According to a Forbes India article, the show's universal themes and humor make it appealing to a global audience, encouraging repeated viewing and, consequently, repeated exposure to English language use. This repeated exposure reinforces language patterns and facilitates the internalization of linguistic structures.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with using *Friends* for language learning, it is essential to acknowledge potential limitations. Liu (2023) cautioned that some content in the series might not align with educational objectives or cultural sensitivities, necessitating careful selection of episodes and scenes for instructional purposes. Additionally, while the series provides exposure to informal language, it may not adequately represent formal or academic English, which is also crucial for comprehensive language proficiency.

Given the potential benefits of incorporating TV series into language learning, this study aims to investigate the specific influence of the American TV show *Friends* on the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language students. By examining this relationship, the research seeks to provide insights into effective strategies for enhancing speaking proficiency through multimedia resources.

2. Literature Review

A key element of language competency is speaking ability, which allows people to successfully communicate ideas, feelings, and information through spoken language. According to Sukma and Rochmawati

(2020), speaking skill involves the capacity to express ideas orally, requiring continuous practice to enhance vocabulary usage, grammatical accuracy, and listening comprehension. They emphasize that regular interaction, especially in educational settings, is crucial for developing fluency and confidence in speaking.

Derakhshan, Khalili, and Beheshti (2016) categorize speaking as a productive skill comprising two main aspects: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy pertains to the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, while fluency relates to the ability to maintain spontaneous speech without undue hesitation. This dual focus underscores the complexity of speaking as a skill that requires both linguistic competence and communicative agility.

Speaking is a vital component of language proficiency, enabling individuals to transmit thoughts, emotions, and information effectively. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition, speaking abilities are multidimensional, covering different factors that contribute to good oral communication. Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are some of the essential elements of speaking ability that have been found in recent studies.

The elements of speaking skills grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are interrelated and collectively contribute to effective oral communication in EFL contexts. Recent research highlights the importance of a balanced approach to developing these components, with particular attention to vocabulary enhancement and fluency practice. Incorporating authentic materials, interactive activities, and consistent exposure to the language can foster comprehensive speaking proficiency among learners.

Speaking skills are often hindered by psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of negative evaluation. Sholikh (2022) highlights that communication apprehension and test anxiety are common among students, but supportive learning environments can help alleviate these challenges. Additionally, educational technology plays a crucial role in enhancing speaking abilities. Tools like YouGlish and FORVO provide interactive pronunciation and fluency practice, making learning more engaging (Sherine et al., 2020). Furthermore, effective teaching approaches, including task-based learning and the PPP (Present-Practice-Produce) method, encourage active participation and real-life communication, leading to measurable improvements in speaking proficiency (Bui & Newton, 2021).

In today's interconnected world, strong speaking skills are essential for effective communication across cultures and professions. Leonita (2023) notes that students often struggle with speaking due to limited exposure to authentic language use, fear of criticism, and low self-confidence. To address these challenges, educators must develop targeted teaching strategies and resources. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a standardized way to assess speaking proficiency, offering clear benchmarks for learners at different levels (Council of Europe, 2020). By aligning instruction with CEFR guidelines, teachers can better support students in achieving fluency and confidence in spoken English.

Television shows, particularly sitcoms like *Friends*, serve as powerful tools for language learning. *Friends*, which aired from 1994 to 2004, features natural dialogues, idiomatic expressions, and American cultural references, making it an ideal resource for English learners (Puspitasari, 2020). Research by Liu (2023) confirms that regular exposure to the show improves lexical knowledge and speaking fluency. The episodic format (20-22 minutes per episode) allows for repeated viewing, reinforcing vocabulary and pronunciation through contextual learning. Additionally, the humor and relatable scenarios in *Friends* make it highly engaging, motivating learners to practice speaking in informal settings.

Unlike traditional textbooks, authentic materials like TV shows expose learners to real-world language use, including slang, intonation, and cultural nuances. Harmer (2007) defines authentic materials as content created for native speakers rather than language learners, emphasizing their value in developing pragmatic competence. Studies by Etikasari et al. (2022) show that watching English TV series enhances motivation, pronunciation, and fluency. Moreover, the visual and auditory elements of TV shows aid in incidental vocabulary learning, where learners unconsciously absorb new words through repeated exposure (Mingboyeva & Iskandarova, 2025). This method complements classroom instruction by providing dynamic, real-life language input.

Multiple studies demonstrate the positive effects of TV shows on speaking proficiency. Djanuwarso and Deskilasari (2022) found that students who regularly watched *Friends* showed significant improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical accuracy. Similarly, Niu (2024) observed that learners who engaged with American TV series developed better idiomatic usage and spontaneous speaking abilities. Puspitasari (2020) also noted that mimicking characters' dialogues helped students gain confidence in conversational English. These findings suggest that while TV shows should not replace formal instruction, they serve as an effective supplementary tool for reinforcing speaking skills in an enjoyable and natural way.

Beyond linguistic benefits, TV shows like *Friends* enhance learners' cultural understanding, which is crucial for effective communication. Mudawe (2021) argues that exposure to sitcoms helps students grasp American social norms, humor, and informal speech patterns. Liu (2023) adds that understanding cultural references and body language improves learners' ability to interpret tone and implied meanings. However, Forbes (2021) cautions that some cultural elements may require additional explanation to avoid misinterpretation.

Overall, integrating TV shows into language learning fosters not only speaking skills but also intercultural competence, preparing students for real-world interactions in diverse settings.

By combining psychological support, technology, authentic media, and cultural exposure, educators can create a holistic approach to developing confident and proficient English speakers.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design to explore the influence of the TV show *Friends* on the speaking skills of EFL students. The approach allows for an in-depth examination of students' experiences through semi-structured interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaires, capturing their perceptions of vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency development (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The participants consist of EFL students who have watched *Friends* at least once and possess intermediate to advanced proficiency. A purposive sampling technique ensures relevance, with a sample size of 3–4 students to allow detailed qualitative analysis.

Data is collected in three phases:

- Questionnaires: Open-ended questions assess viewing habits and self-perceived speaking improvements.
- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews explore engagement with *Friends*, favorite episodes, and perceived linguistic benefits.
- Observations: Naturalistic speaking tasks (e.g., role-plays) are analyzed using a qualitative rubric focusing on fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) identifies patterns in interview and questionnaire responses, while descriptive analysis evaluates observational data. Triangulation of methods enhances validity, linking self-reported experiences with actual speaking performance.

Participants provide informed consent, and data is anonymized to ensure confidentiality. A pilot test refines instruments for clarity and relevance before full implementation. This methodology provides a holistic understanding of how *Friends* influences speaking skills, combining learner perspectives with observable linguistic outcomes.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

The results of the study show that the American sitcom *Friends* is a very useful tool for helping learners become more fluent in English. This is consistent with the idea of incidental language learning through media exposure, which Sherine (2020) discovered to be especially helpful for developing fluency and pronunciation when using real-world resources like *Friends*. Following regular exposure to the show, participants reported a considerable rise in their confidence while speaking English, confirming Puspitasari's (2020) finding that sitcoms improve learners' oral confidence by acquainting them with natural speech patterns.

Imitation and shadowing tactics were the participants' main learning mechanisms; they mimicked the actors' facial expressions, intonation, and pronunciation. This result is consistent with Derakhshan et al. (2016)'s focus on the significance of fluency and linguistic accuracy in speaking proficiency. Notably, in contrast to the formal patterns usually taught in academic settings, *Friends*' casual and organic discourse exposed students to real-world language use. According to Liu (2023), these real-world resources provide priceless exposure to pragmatic language use, such as word contractions, related speech, and vernacular idioms that are frequently missed in textbooks.

Significant gains in listening comprehension were also seen in the study, confirming the findings of Etikasari et al. (2022) that regular exposure to English TV shows improves auditory processing abilities. Understanding was further aided by the cast members' clear enunciation, which Niu (2024) noted as being essential for learners adjusting to native speech patterns. Beyond linguistic improvements, participants gained cultural competency, which Mudawe (2021) contends is necessary for genuine language mastery in cross-cultural communication scenarios, and increased their vocabulary by picking up idioms and slang.

4.2 Discussion

Together, this present study highlighted the educational benefits of real media, such as *Friends*, in promoting sociocultural and language competency. According to Bui and Newton (2021), these resources enhance formal education by offering opportunities for real-world language practice that conventional classroom approaches would not offer. Thus, the study demonstrates that when properly included into learning frameworks, the strategic use of sitcoms can greatly improve English language acquisition.

5. Conclusion

According to the study, Friends has a major impact on improving the speaking abilities of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Consistent exposure to the comedy enhanced learners' confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency in spoken English, according to qualitative analysis. Friends offered an immersive learning experience that connected theory to real-world application through its genuine conversations, slang terms, and cultural backgrounds.

Participants reported enhanced fluency and clearer pronunciation by imitating the actors' speech pattern and intonation, exposure to idiomatic expressions and slang enriched learners' lexical knowledge, which is often absent in traditional textbooks, the relatable and engaging content of *friends* reduced speaking anxiety and motivated learners to practice English more frequently, the sitcom familiarized students with American cultural norms and social contexts, fostering better communicative competence in real-world interactions.

The study highlights the advantages of employing real audio-visual resources, like Friends, but it also points out drawbacks, like the necessity of choosing specific episodes to support learning objectives and the possible absence of formal language representation. However, the results support the deliberate inclusion of TV shows in EFL courses as an additional resource to enhance conventional teaching techniques.

To sum up, Friends is a fun and useful tool for enhancing the speaking abilities of EFL students. Teachers are urged to use these multimedia resources to develop dynamic, captivating classrooms that meet the various needs of language learners. Future studies could examine how TV shows affect language skills over the long run and how best to integrate them into formal education.

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