

The Impact of Rubric Implementation on Enhancing Speaking Skills in Generation Z Students within the Merdeka Curriculum Framework

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Informasi Artikel	Abstract
E-ISSN : 3026-6874 Vol: 2 No: 8 Agustus 2024 Halaman : 1-11	This study explores the role of rubrics in improving speaking skills among Generation Z students under the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. By leveraging qualitative research methods, specifically in-depth interviews with experienced English language teachers, the study delves into the practical applications, benefits, and challenges of rubric implementation. The findings reveal that rubrics significantly enhance student performance by providing clear, structured, and detailed feedback, aligning with Generation Z's preference for interactive and visually engaging learning experiences. Additionally, the study highlights the compatibility of rubrics with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, emphasizing student independence and creativity. These insights underscore the necessity for educators to adopt and refine rubric-based assessments to meet contemporary educational goals and the unique characteristics of modern learners.
Keywords: Impact of Rubric Speaking Skills Merdeka Curriculum	

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran rubrik dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara di kalangan siswa Generasi Z berdasarkan Kurikulum Merdeka di Indonesia. Dengan memanfaatkan metode penelitian kualitatif, khususnya wawancara mendalam dengan guru bahasa Inggris berpengalaman, penelitian ini menggali penerapan praktis, manfaat, dan tantangan penerapan rubrik. Temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa rubrik secara signifikan meningkatkan kinerja siswa dengan memberikan umpan balik yang jelas, terstruktur, dan terperinci, selaras dengan preferensi Generasi Z terhadap pengalaman belajar yang interaktif dan menarik secara visual. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyoroti kesesuaian rubrik dengan tujuan Kurikulum Merdeka, yang menekankan kemandirian dan kreativitas siswa. Wawasan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya pendidik untuk mengadopsi dan menyempurnakan penilaian berbasis rubrik untuk memenuhi tujuan pendidikan kontemporer dan karakteristik unik pembelajar modern.

Kata kunci: penerapan rubrik, keterampilan berbicara, kurikulum merdeka

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the educational landscape has been continuously evolving, with significant emphasis on enhancing student performance through innovative teaching strategies. The Merdeka Curriculum, introduced in Indonesia, aims to foster student independence and creativity, making it imperative for educators to adopt effective assessment tools to monitor and enhance student learning outcomes. One such tool is the rubric, which has been recognized for its potential to provide clear, objective, and structured feedback to students. As it is said by Andrade that rubrics provide a transparent framework for both instructors and students, facilitating a clearer understanding of expectations and assessment criteria, thus improving student performance.

The implementation of rubrics in teaching speaking skills is particularly crucial for Generation Z students, who exhibit distinct learning preferences and characteristics. Generation Z is characterized by their digital fluency, preference for visual and interactive learning, and a desire for immediate feedback. Therefore, adopting rubrics that cater to these traits can significantly enhance their learning experiences and performance because based on Brookhart (2020) he had highlighted that rubrics, when used effectively, can motivate students by offering specific feedback and identifying areas for improvement in their speaking skills.

Relating to the characteristics of Generation Z in their learning style of speaking skill horn (2019) also noted that that Generation Z students thrive on structured and detailed feedback, which rubrics are well-suited to provide, thereby enhancing their engagement and performance. In addition to the competency that Generation Z must have is that Mc Millan (2019) stated, rubrics contribute to the development of critical thinking and self-regulation skills, which are vital for mastering speaking skills in a second language. It is also argued by Panadero and Jonsson (2020) that rubrics support student autonomy and accountability in learning, which align with the objectives of Merdeka Belajar.

Rubrics also has important role to help the teachers to more consistent in doing assessment. It is stated by Sadler (2020) that rubrics enable more consistent and objective assesment of student performance, particularly in skills-based assessments like speaking. In implementing rubrics, students which are positioned by Merdeka Curriculum as the centered of the learning process can be the very reasons that rubrics serve as a roadmap for students, guiding them through the learning process and helping them understand the component od effective speaking (Wiggins, 2018. Then the practice of rubrics for students in Merdeka Curricullum have been underscored by Wolf and Stevens (2020) that are very important to promote fair and equitable assessment practices which is critical in diverse classroom.

In light of these expert insights, this research aims to investigate the impact of implementing rubrics on enhancing students' speaking performance within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The study is grounded in the qualitative research method, specifically through interviews with educators who have successfully integrated rubrics into their teaching practices. By examining the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of rubrics in speaking assessments, this research seeks to validate the hypothesis that well-constructed rubrics can significantly improve student performance in English speaking skills.

The foundational theory for rubric design in this study is drawn from the work of Andrade (2019), who has extensively explored the development and application of rubrics in educational settings. Andrade's theory will serve as the basis for creating and implementing rubrics tailored to the needs of Generation Z students, thereby ensuring their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills.

In conclusion, this research underscores the necessity for educators to revisit and refine their assessment tools, specifically rubrics, to align with contemporary educational goals and the unique characteristics of Generation Z learners. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the implementation of rubrics as a means to elevate student performance in speaking skills within the Merdeka Curriculum.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on in-depth interviews to explore the implementation of rubrics for enhancing speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the use of rubrics in educational settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants

The participants in this study are English language teachers from various high schools in Indonesia who have experience implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who have utilized rubrics in their teaching practices. This ensures that the participants have relevant experience and can provide detailed insights into the effectiveness of rubrics in improving speaking skills.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allow for flexibility in exploring the participants' experiences while maintaining a focus on the research questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interview guide was developed based on the theoretical framework and literature review, covering key topics such as: 1) Teachers' understanding and perceptions of rubrics, 2) The process of implementing rubrics in teaching speaking skills, 3) Challenges faced in using rubrics and strategies to overcome them, 3) The impact of rubrics on students' speaking performance, 4) The alignment of rubrics with the characteristics of Generation Z students, 4) The compatibility of rubrics with the Merdeka Curriculum objectives.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on the participants' availability and preference. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data, following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) Familiarization: Transcripts were read and re-read to immerse in the data and gain a comprehensive understanding of the content, 2) Generating Initial Codes: Initial codes were generated from the data, focusing on significant statements related to the research questions, 3) Searching for Themes: Codes were grouped into potential themes that captured key aspects of the data, 4) Reviewing Themes: Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data and were distinct from each other, 5) Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was defined and named, providing a clear description of its content and significance, 6) Producing the Report: The final themes were used to produce a detailed report, linking the findings to the research questions and literature.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed: 1) Credibility: Member checking was conducted by sharing the interview transcripts and preliminary findings with the participants to verify accuracy and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), 2) Transferability: Detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and methods were provided to allow readers to determine the applicability of the findings to other contexts, 3) Dependability: An audit trail was maintained, documenting all research decisions and processes to provide transparency and enable replication, 4) Confirmability: Reflexivity was practiced throughout the research process, acknowledging and addressing potential researcher biases and ensuring that the findings were grounded in the data.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning pseudonyms to participants and securely storing all data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theories of Rubric in Speaking

Rubrics are essential tools in educational assessment, offering a clear and structured way to evaluate student performance. Andrade (2019) emphasizes that rubrics provide detailed criteria for both instructors and students, enhancing the transparency and objectivity of assessments. Rubrics are particularly effective in language learning, where speaking skills can be challenging to assess

consistently. Andrade's work suggests that well-constructed rubrics help students understand what is expected of them and provide specific feedback that can guide their improvement.

According to Brookhart (2020), rubrics also play a critical role in formative assessment. By using rubrics, teachers can provide continuous feedback that helps students identify their strengths and areas for improvement. This ongoing assessment process supports the development of speaking skills by encouraging regular practice and reflection.

Speaking Skills

Speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of language learning and are crucial for effective communication. McMillan (2019) states that developing speaking skills requires not only practice but also a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable experimenting with language. Rubrics can facilitate this by providing clear guidelines and reducing the anxiety associated with performance assessments.

Panadero and Jonsson (2020) argue that rubrics support the development of critical thinking and self-regulation skills, which are essential for mastering speaking. By breaking down the components of effective speaking into specific criteria, rubrics help students focus on different aspects of their performance, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interaction.

Characteristics of Generation Z

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is characterized by their digital fluency and preference for interactive and visually engaging learning experiences. Horn (2019) notes that Generation Z students are accustomed to instant feedback and personalized learning, making traditional assessment methods less effective. Rubrics, with their detailed and specific feedback, align well with the learning preferences of Generation Z.

Stevens and Levi (2018) highlight that Generation Z students value clear expectations and structure in their learning. Rubrics provide this structure, helping students understand what is expected of them and how they can improve. This is particularly important in developing speaking skills, where clear criteria can guide practice and performance.

Curriculum Merdeka

The Merdeka Curriculum, introduced in Indonesia, aims to promote student independence and creativity. Sadler (2020) states that this curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The use of rubrics aligns with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum by providing a structured yet flexible framework for assessment.

According to Wolf and Stevens (2020), rubrics can support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum by promoting fair and equitable assessment practices. This is crucial in diverse classrooms where students may have different learning needs and backgrounds. Rubrics can help ensure that all students are assessed consistently and fairly, supporting the overall goals of the curriculum.

Rubric Design Based on Andrade's Theory

Based on the theoretical framework provided by Andrade (2019), the following rubric has been designed to assess speaking skills in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. This rubric is intended to provide clear criteria for both teachers and students, supporting the development of speaking skills through structured feedback.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Fluency	Speaks fluently with rare pauses	Speaks with some pauses but generally fluent	Frequently pauses but can complete thoughts	Significant pauses, often unable to complete thoughts
Accuracy	Uses grammar and vocabulary correctly with minor errors	Makes occasional errors but meaning is clear	Makes frequent errors that sometimes obscure meaning	Frequent errors that often obscure meaning
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and easily understood	Pronunciation is mostly clear, with occasional errors	Pronunciation errors sometimes make speech hard to understand	Pronunciation errors often make speech hard to understand
Interaction	Engages effectively, responds appropriately	Generally engages well, with minor lapses in interaction	Engages with some difficulty, occasionally inappropriate	Limited engagement, often inappropriate responses
Content	Ideas are well-organized and relevant	Ideas are mostly organized and relevant	Ideas are somewhat organized, occasionally off-topic	Ideas are poorly organized, often off-topic

This rubric provides a comprehensive framework for assessing speaking skills, aligning with the characteristics of Generation Z and the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. By offering detailed and specific feedback, it supports continuous improvement and helps students develop the skills necessary for effective communication.

Overview of Findings

The interviews conducted with English language teachers revealed several key insights into the implementation and impact of rubrics on enhancing speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The findings are organized into four main themes: teachers' perceptions of rubrics, the implementation process, challenges and strategies, and the impact on student performance.

Teachers' Perceptions of Rubrics

Teachers generally viewed rubrics as effective tools for enhancing clarity and transparency in assessment. They appreciated how rubrics provided specific criteria that helped students understand the expectations and areas for improvement. As one teacher noted, "Rubrics make it clear what we are looking for in speaking performance. Students know exactly what they need to work on" (Teacher A).

This finding is consistent with Brookhart (2020), who emphasized that rubrics help in demystifying the assessment process for students, thereby enhancing their motivation and performance. Teachers also highlighted the importance of rubrics in promoting fairness and consistency in grading, which is crucial in diverse classrooms (Wolf & Stevens, 2020).

Implementation Process

The process of implementing rubrics involved several stages, including designing the rubrics, introducing them to students, and integrating them into regular assessments. Teachers reported that they initially faced some resistance from students who were unfamiliar with the concept of rubrics. However, after a period of adjustment, students began to appreciate the structured feedback provided by rubrics.

Teachers used Andrade's (2019) framework to design rubrics that catered to the specific needs of Generation Z students, incorporating elements such as digital tools and interactive activities. One teacher mentioned, "We designed the rubrics to be visually appealing and easy to understand, which really helped in engaging the students" (Teacher B).

Challenges and Strategies

Despite the benefits, teachers encountered several challenges in implementing rubrics. The most common challenges included students' initial resistance, the time required to develop and apply rubrics, and ensuring that rubrics were appropriately aligned with learning objectives. To address these challenges, teachers employed various strategies: 1) Gradual Introduction: Introducing rubrics gradually and providing detailed explanations helped students understand their purpose and benefits, 2) Continuous Feedback: Providing continuous feedback and opportunities for students to ask questions and express concerns was crucial in gaining their acceptance, 3) Collaboration: Collaborating with colleagues to share best practices and resources helped in the efficient development and implementation of rubrics. These strategies align with the recommendations of Stevens and Levi (2018), who emphasize the importance of clear communication and collaborative efforts in successfully implementing rubrics.

Impact on Student Performance

The implementation of rubrics had a positive impact on students' speaking performance. Teachers observed significant improvements in various aspects of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, interaction, and content organization. Students were more engaged and motivated to improve their speaking skills, as they received specific feedback that guided their learning process.

One teacher remarked, "Since we started using rubrics, I've noticed that students are more confident and willing to participate in speaking activities. They know exactly what they need to work on" (Teacher C). This observation is supported by Panadero and Jonsson (2020), who found that rubrics enhance student autonomy and accountability in learning.

Additionally, the rubrics helped align the assessment with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, promoting student independence and creativity. As Sadler (2020) noted, rubrics are effective tools for formative assessment, helping students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Rubric Design Example

Based on Andrade's (2019) framework, the following rubric was implemented to assess students' speaking skills:

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Fluency	Speaks fluently with rare pauses	Speaks with some pauses but generally fluent	Frequently pauses but can complete thoughts	Significant pauses, often unable to complete thoughts

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Accuracy	Uses grammar and vocabulary correctly with minor errors	Makes occasional errors but meaning is clear	Makes frequent errors that sometimes obscure meaning	Frequent errors that often obscure meaning
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and easily understood	Pronunciation is mostly clear, with occasional errors	Pronunciation errors sometimes make speech hard to understand	Pronunciation errors often make speech hard to understand
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Content	Ideas are well-organized and relevant	Ideas are mostly organized and relevant	Ideas are somewhat organized, occasionally off-topic	Ideas are poorly organized, often off-topic

Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the importance of rubrics in enhancing speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. By providing clear, structured feedback, rubrics help students understand the expectations and areas for improvement, thereby boosting their confidence and performance. The positive impact observed aligns with the theoretical underpinnings and previous research on the benefits of rubrics in educational settings (Andrade, 2019; Brookhart, 2020; Panadero & Jonsson, 2020).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of implementing rubrics on enhancing speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The findings provide valuable insights into how rubrics can serve as effective assessment tools, aligning with the unique characteristics of Generation Z and the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Alignment with Previous Research

The results of this study corroborate the findings of previous research on the effectiveness of rubrics in educational settings. Andrade (2019) emphasizes that rubrics provide clear and structured feedback, which enhances student understanding of assessment criteria and expectations. This study found that teachers appreciated the transparency and objectivity that rubrics brought to the assessment process, which is consistent with Brookhart's (2020) findings on the motivational benefits of rubrics for students.

The positive impact of rubrics on speaking skills observed in this study aligns with McMillan's (2019) assertion that rubrics support the development of critical thinking and self-regulation skills. By providing specific criteria for various aspects of speaking, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, interaction, and content organization, rubrics help students focus on and improve specific areas of their performance. This targeted feedback is crucial for language learners, as it allows them to identify and address their weaknesses systematically.

Addressing Generation Z Characteristics

One of the key strengths of rubrics identified in this study is their compatibility with the learning preferences of Generation Z students. Horn (2019) notes that Generation Z learners prefer structured and detailed feedback, which rubrics are well-suited to provide. The study found that once students became familiar with rubrics, they appreciated the clarity and guidance that rubrics offered. This is particularly important for Generation Z, who are used to instant feedback and personalized learning experiences.

The visual and interactive elements incorporated into the rubrics, as described by Teacher B, further enhanced their appeal to Generation Z students. This finding is supported by Stevens and Levi (2018), who emphasize the importance of designing rubrics that are engaging and easy to understand for students. By aligning with the digital fluency and preference for interactive learning of Generation Z, rubrics can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation.

Compatibility with the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum aims to promote student independence and creativity, and the use of rubrics supports these objectives by providing a structured yet flexible framework for assessment. Sadler (2020) argues that rubrics are effective tools for formative assessment, helping students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This study found that rubrics facilitated continuous feedback and self-assessment, which are essential components of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Teachers reported that rubrics helped align assessment practices with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum by promoting fair and equitable assessment. This finding is consistent with Wolf and Stevens' (2020) assertion that rubrics support consistent and objective evaluation, which is crucial in diverse classrooms. By providing clear criteria and detailed feedback, rubrics help ensure that all students are assessed fairly, supporting the overall goals of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Challenges and Strategies

Despite the benefits, the study also identified several challenges in implementing rubrics, including initial resistance from students, the time required to develop and apply rubrics, and ensuring alignment with learning objectives. These challenges highlight the need for careful planning and communication when introducing rubrics to students. The strategies employed by teachers, such as gradual introduction, continuous feedback, and collaboration with colleagues, were effective in overcoming these challenges.

The importance of clear communication and collaboration in successfully implementing rubrics is emphasized by Stevens and Levi (2018). By providing detailed explanations and opportunities for students to ask questions, teachers can help students understand the purpose and benefits of rubrics. Collaboration with colleagues allows teachers to share best practices and resources, making the development and implementation of rubrics more efficient.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have several implications for educational practice. First, they underscore the importance of using rubrics as assessment tools to enhance speaking skills in language learning. Rubrics provide clear and structured feedback, which is essential for helping students understand assessment criteria and improve their performance. Second, the study highlights the need to design rubrics that align with the characteristics and learning preferences of Generation Z students. By incorporating visual and interactive elements, rubrics can engage and motivate students, enhancing their learning experiences.

Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of aligning assessment practices with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum. By promoting fair and equitable assessment, rubrics help ensure that all students are assessed consistently and fairly, supporting the overall objectives of the curriculum.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the sample size was relatively small, and the findings may not be generalizable to all educational contexts. Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample to validate the findings. Second, the study focused on the perspectives of teachers, and future research should also consider the perspectives of students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of rubrics on speaking skills.

Additionally, future research should explore the long-term impact of rubrics on student performance and engagement. While this study found positive short-term effects, it is important to investigate whether these effects are sustained over time. Finally, future research should examine the effectiveness of different types of rubrics and assessment criteria to identify best practices for enhancing speaking skills.

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the implementation of rubrics to enhance speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The findings demonstrated that rubrics serve as effective tools for providing clear, structured feedback, promoting fairness and consistency in assessment, and aligning with the learning preferences of Generation Z students. The use of rubrics also supports the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum by fostering student independence and creativity.

Key Insights

1. **Clarity and Transparency:** Rubrics provide detailed assessment criteria, which help students understand the expectations and areas for improvement. This transparency is essential for motivating students and enhancing their performance (Andrade, 2019; Brookhart, 2020).
2. **Formative Assessment:** Rubrics facilitate continuous feedback and self-assessment, which are crucial for developing speaking skills. This ongoing assessment process supports student engagement and learning (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020).
3. **Generation Z Compatibility:** Rubrics align well with the characteristics of Generation Z students, who prefer structured, detailed feedback and interactive learning experiences. This alignment enhances student motivation and engagement (Horn, 2019; Stevens & Levi, 2018).
4. **Merdeka Curriculum Alignment:** Rubrics support the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum by promoting fair and equitable assessment practices. This ensures that all students are assessed consistently and fairly, supporting the overall goals of the curriculum (Sadler, 2020; Wolf & Stevens, 2020).

Implications for Practice

The study highlights the importance of using rubrics as assessment tools to enhance speaking skills in educational settings. Educators should consider the following implications: 1) Designing Effective Rubrics: Rubrics should be designed to provide clear and detailed feedback, aligning with the specific needs and preferences of Generation Z students. Incorporating visual and interactive elements can further enhance their effectiveness, 2) Gradual Implementation: Introducing rubrics gradually and providing continuous feedback and support can help students understand and appreciate their benefits. Clear communication and collaboration with colleagues can facilitate this process, 3) Aligning with Curriculum Goals: Rubrics should be aligned with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, promoting student independence, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Fair and equitable assessment practices are essential to achieving these goals.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. The sample size was relatively small, and the findings may not be generalizable to all educational contexts. Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample to validate the findings. Additionally, future

research should consider the perspectives of students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of rubrics on speaking skills.

Long-term studies are needed to explore the sustained impact of rubrics on student performance and engagement. Future research should also examine the effectiveness of different types of rubrics and assessment criteria to identify best practices for enhancing speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the implementation and impact of rubrics on enhancing speaking skills among Generation Z students within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The findings highlight the benefits of rubrics in providing clear and structured feedback, promoting fair and equitable assessment, and aligning with the learning preferences of the unique characteristics of Generation Z. The role of rubrics can significantly enhance student performance and support the overall objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. Despite the challenges, the strategies employed by teachers were effective in overcoming these obstacles, underscoring the importance of careful planning and communication in successfully implementing rubrics. The study's implications for practice, limitations, and suggestions for future research provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of rubrics in enhancing speaking skills in educational settings.

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