

Effective strategies for enhancing English speaking competence among learners in English education study programs

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Abstract - This study aims to evaluate the English-speaking skills of 5th-semester Class B students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at the University of Nias. The main objective is to assess students' speaking proficiency using a standardized speaking test assessment rubric and to classify their performance into various levels of competence. The evaluation focuses on determining the mean score, mode, and categorization of students' speaking abilities to provide a clearer understanding of their proficiency distribution. A quantitative research method was employed in this study, involving 41 students as research participants. Data collection was conducted through a structured English-speaking test administered in an interview format. The test assessed several components of speaking competence, including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. The results were then analysed statistically to determine overall performance trends. The analysis revealed a diverse range of speaking proficiency among the students. Out of the 41 participants, 5 students (12.2%) demonstrated very good speaking skills, 10 students (24.4%) were categorized as good, 25 students (61.0%) were identified as having sufficient proficiency, while only 1 student (2.4%) was categorized as insufficient. The mean score indicated a moderate level of overall proficiency among the class, while the mode score aligned with the "sufficient" category, indicating that this was the most common level among the group. The study concludes that while a majority of students possess adequate speaking skills, there remains significant room for improvement. These findings underscore the importance of differentiated instruction and targeted speaking activities to enhance language competence. Educators are encouraged to implement tailored pedagogical strategies that address the specific needs of learners across all proficiency levels. The results of this study provide valuable insights for curriculum developers and instructors seeking to improve spoken English instruction within similar academic contexts.

Keywords: speaking skills; quantitative analysis; speaking test rubric; interview method; proficiency levels

1. Introduction

Language is a tool used to communicate with others. Language is an important thing in our life, because everyone needs language as a means of communication with other people, knowledge of language is the doorway to wisdom. People can communicate one another through language. To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world.

Speaking is an ability of someone to convey words that express ideas or opinions. Speaking is important in human life. Speaking is an important skill in language learning, but it is not an easy skill to learn or teach (Pakula, 2019). Speaking is important in conduct the communication, where through speaking, people can express their opinion and their thoughts about something. Then, Rajitha (2019) said that speaking is considered as the fundamental and very efficient form of human communication. It is a process through which people exchange ideas, views, opinions and all other information. The most significant process of any language learning is speaking.

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Meanwhile, ability according to language means the ability of a person to use adequate language seen from the language system, including good manners, understanding the



turn in conversation. Speaking ability is the ability to express opinions or thoughts and feelings to a person or group orally, either face to face or at a distance face to face or at a distance.

English is viewed as a language which gives you access to the world. English as a second language (ELS) education has gained an increasingly important role in career development in science, business, and industry on the global stage. It means that students should have motivation to learn English, because English now give you access to the world. In Indonesia, English was declared as the first foreign language in a teacher trainer conference in 1955. The same status of English as a foreign language stands until right now. For recent years, the students have learnt English since they are at elementary school level up to university level.

As the college students, it is important for them to able to speak in English. It will be weird if students in English department not able to communicate in English. Students are expected to mastering English not only in one skill but in four skills of language. Uztosun (2020, 2021) says that teaching and learning English to speaker of other language is challenging, particularly in an environment without sufficient input and output to support learners' English as a foreign language (L2) development. Although it is challenging but students should master the skill of language especially speaking.

The development of speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been extensively researched, with numerous studies highlighting various factors that influence students' willingness to communicate (WTC) and language proficiency. One significant emotional factor affecting communication is language anxiety, which can substantially hinder learners' engagement in the language learning process. Alenezi (2020) demonstrates that anxiety plays a crucial role in affecting learners' WTC, particularly in EFL contexts. However, focusing exclusively on anxiety may overlook other relevant individual or contextual variables that can also shape WTC.

The relationship between language proficiency and WTC is another essential aspect of EFL learning. As language proficiency increases, so does students' willingness to communicate, as evidenced by Biria and Jouybar (2016), who found that learners with higher language skills are more likely to participate in communication. This study effectively links language proficiency with WTC but could have benefited from considering additional factors, such as motivation or social influences, which can also impact communicative behaviour.

In her case study of Indonesian EFL students, Wahjuningsih (2020) identifies various factors that influence WTC in the classroom, such as teaching methods, learner characteristics, and the classroom environment. This comprehensive approach provides a deep understanding of the complexities involved in language acquisition. However, a deeper exploration of socio-cultural factors, which often vary across contexts, could enhance the understanding of how WTC is shaped in different settings. Tuan and Mai (2015) examined strategies and challenges faced by EFL students in developing speaking skills, finding that insufficient speaking opportunities, lack of motivation, and limited practice hindered students' development. They emphasize the need for more speaking activities and a supportive environment to encourage communication. However, their study could have expanded by considering how digital tools and technologies might provide additional support in overcoming these challenges and fostering language skills. Kormos and Csizér (2014) explored the interaction between motivation, attitudes, and language learning success, revealing that intrinsic motivation, driven by personal goals and interest in the language, significantly enhances proficiency and engagement. Their study highlights the importance of motivation but could have delved deeper into how external factors, such as peer influence or teacher support, contribute to improving speaking competence.

The study by Yan et al., (2024) demonstrates an innovative approach to enhancing English language learners' speaking skills through the use of a situated learning framework within Virtual Reality (VR)-enhanced environments. By placing learners in authentic virtual scenarios, the research shows that motivation and speaking proficiency improve significantly. However, the reliance on advanced technology may pose accessibility challenges, particularly in resource-limited settings, raising concerns about scalability and implementation in diverse educational contexts. This work highlights the potential of technology-enhanced learning but also points to its limitations in broader applications.

Bolkvadze (2023) examines how written translation can support the development of speaking skills in English learners. By engaging in translation tasks, learners improve linguistic accuracy and vocabulary acquisition, which indirectly benefit speaking proficiency. This approach bridges written and oral skills, providing an alternative pathway to fluency. However, the focus on translation may reduce opportunities for spontaneous speaking practice, a critical element of communicative competence. Furthermore, since the findings are primarily theoretical, more empirical evidence is required to validate the effectiveness of this approach in practical learning environments.



Setiawan and Pranowo (2022) develop speaking skill materials based on Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, focusing on gradual linguistic complexity to enhance learners' confidence and competence. The study is grounded in robust theoretical principles and provides practical applications that educators can adopt. However, the approach's emphasis on linguistic progression may neglect affective and sociocultural factors that significantly influence speaking performance. This suggests the need for a more holistic strategy to address the diverse needs of language learners.

The flipped classroom model, investigated by Sudarmaji et al (2021), proves effective in improving speaking skills by reversing traditional teaching methods. Learners prepare before class, allowing class time to be dedicated to interactive speaking practice. This method leads to noticeable improvements in fluency and interactional skills. However, the success of this model depends heavily on learners' preparedness and access to pre-class materials, which can be challenging for students with limited resources or self-regulation skills. While the study underscores the value of active learning, it also highlights the need for strategies to support learner autonomy.

Barriers to Bangladeshi EFL learners' speaking skill development, including limited English exposure, fear of mistakes, and inadequate pedagogical practices, are identified through a thorough analysis of socio-cultural and institutional challenges. This study raises awareness of systemic issues but offers limited actionable strategies for educators (Mridha & Muniruzzaman, 2020; cf. Wajdi, 2018). Future research should focus on targeted interventions to address these barriers effectively.

Task-based learning to promote real-life communication and integrate theoretical and practical strategies for skill development are essential frameworks for educators. However, examining technology's role in addressing diverse learner needs would strengthen the findings (Nunan, 2003; Richards, 2008). Improved curriculum alignment is presented through a structured approach to developing speaking materials based on essential competencies, though the study does not address long-term impacts (Al Hakim et al., 2023). Self-regulated strategies for developing speaking skills could be strengthened with a broader sample (Gani et al., 2015).

Audiovisual aids' effectiveness in ESL speaking instruction is highlighted, although causal claims are weakened by the absence of a control group (Bhatti et al., 2019). Malaysia's EFL curriculum is analysed for alignment with communicative principles, yet practical implementation is unassessed (Baharun et al., 2016). Enhancements in fluency and interaction through communicative tasks are showcased, though applicability is limited by the single-university scope (Chaisongkram, 2018). A unique linguistic perspective is offered on Arabic narration by Japanese-speaking learners, though sociolinguistic depth is lacking (Hassan, 2020). Cultural elements are advocated to improve speaking skills, though empirical validation is needed (Hamurabi, 2016).

Factors influencing Ecuadorian EFL learners' speaking development are analysed from teachers' perspectives, providing practical insights, but including learners' viewpoints would yield a more balanced analysis (Alvarez et al., 2024). Digital storytelling's benefits in engagement and creativity are demonstrated, but other contributing factors are neglected (Hidayat et al., 2024).

A comprehensive overview of strategies for improving English speaking skills is synthesized, though real-world applicability is limited by reliance on secondary data (Salman & Yanpar-Yelken, 2024). An integrated approach to developing L2 speaking competence is proposed, though empirical validation is necessary (Sabnani & Renandya, 2019).

Significant improvements in speaking skills through project-based learning and digital English books are reported, though implementation challenges are omitted (Puspitasari & Sofiana, 2024). Valuable qualitative insights into EFL students' self-confidence are provided, but the small sample size limits representativeness (Sumanto & Saharani, 2023).

Spontaneity and fluency are enhanced through the impromptu speech method, though challenges learners face remain underexplored (Azzahra et al., 2019). Vocabulary and pronunciation enhancement through Duolingo are examined, but limitations for advanced learners are overlooked (Fitria et al., 2023). Collaborative and independent strategies for developing speaking skills are highlighted but could benefit from addressing teacher interventions (Purwanti et al., 2021). Practical recommendations for improving speaking skills are offered, but regional applicability constraints remain (Triatloka et al., 2017). The potential of digital storytelling in fostering creativity and language use among Thai students is revealed, though long-term outcomes are unexplored (Manussanun, 2012).

The article that explores the strategies employed by students in enhancing their speaking skills in It utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach, gathering data through interviews and documentation to identify the learning strategies most commonly used by the students was done by Purwanti et al., (2021). The findings reveal that students predominantly adopt cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies to



improve their speaking abilities. The authors highlight cognitive strategies such as repetition, note-taking, and practicing pronunciation, which enable learners to internalize language rules effectively. Additionally, the study emphasizes the role of metacognitive strategies, including goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflection, in fostering autonomous learning habits. Social strategies, like engaging in group discussions and seeking feedback from peers or instructors, are noted for their significance in creating interactive and supportive learning environments.

The research also points out challenges faced by students, such as limited vocabulary, anxiety, and insufficient practice opportunities. Recommendations are provided for educators to design activities that encourage active participation and foster confidence among learners. The study contributes to the understanding of practical strategies that can be implemented in similar educational contexts to enhance speaking skills. Although the findings are insightful, the study could benefit from a larger sample size and a broader scope to ensure generalizability. Moreover, incorporating quantitative measures could strengthen the reliability of the results. The article is a valuable resource for educators and researchers interested in language learning strategies (Purwanti et al., 2021).

Although these studies significantly contribute to understanding the factors influencing WTC and speaking competence, many focus on individual aspects such as anxiety, motivation, or language proficiency without integrating them into a broader framework. Future research should explore the interconnectedness of these factors and how they collectively influence EFL learners' speaking competence. Additionally, incorporating socio-cultural, contextual, and technological factors into future studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic nature of language acquisition in modern global contexts.

This research was conducted to evaluate the speaking skills of students in the English Education Study Program at a university, with a particular focus on assessing their proficiency through a speaking test assessment rubric. The primary goal of the study was to determine the mean score of students' speaking abilities, analyse the mode of their scores, and categorize the students' speaking performance based on the obtained results. The research specifically targets fifth-semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program, aiming to provide insights into their speaking abilities, which is a crucial component of language learning.

The population for this research consists of students from the fifth semester of the English Education Study Program. A total of 41 students were selected as the sample, using a cluster sampling method. This approach was chosen to ensure a representative sample of students who are at a similar level of study within the program, as their speaking abilities are expected to reflect the progression of language learning over the course of their education. By examining this sample, the study aims to assess the overall speaking proficiency of students in this program and identify areas of improvement or concern. Previous research in the field of English language education has explored various aspects of speaking fluency and speaking ability. These studies have examined how different factors influence language learners' speaking proficiency, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and the psychological factors that can hinder or support communication in a second language. While these studies have contributed valuable knowledge about speaking skills in general, this research specifically focuses on the English-speaking abilities of students in an English Education Study Program. It seeks to fill a gap in the existing literature by focusing on university-level students and evaluating their speaking proficiency within the context of their formal English education.

Despite years of formal English language instruction, it has been observed that some students still struggle to communicate effectively in English. This issue is prevalent even among students in advanced stages of their English studies, such as those in the fifth semester. The study aims to investigate the extent of this issue and explore the factors that may contribute to students' difficulties in speaking English. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the current state of students' speaking skills and help educators develop strategies to improve students' speaking proficiency.

The research highlights several key factors that influence students' speaking skills in English. One important aspect is pronunciation. For Indonesian learners, pronouncing English words and sentences may seem easier than for learners from other linguistic backgrounds. However, the challenge arises when considering the different accents and dialects that exist within the English language. To improve pronunciation, it is essential for students to focus on mastering a particular accent or dialect, as switching between accents can lead to confusion and hinder effective communication. Therefore, providing clear guidance on pronunciation and helping students understand the importance of consistency in accent usage is crucial.

Another significant factor affecting speaking skills is grammar. A solid understanding of



grammar is essential for constructing accurate and coherent sentences in English. Students who lack confidence in their grammatical abilities may struggle to express their thoughts clearly, leading to communication breakdowns. To address this issue, it is important to not only practice grammar exercises but also create opportunities for students to apply their grammar knowledge in real-life speaking situations. Engaging in discussions with peers, participating in speaking clubs, and using online platforms where students can interact with native speakers are all effective ways to reinforce grammar in speaking contexts.

Vocabulary also plays a critical role in speaking proficiency. A wide vocabulary allows students to express themselves more precisely and fluently. To enhance vocabulary acquisition, students should engage in extensive reading, use dictionaries, and make a habit of learning new words in context. Regularly practicing speaking by incorporating new vocabulary into conversations will help students reinforce their language knowledge and increase their confidence in using English. The more words a student knows, the more accurately they can communicate, thereby improving their overall speaking ability. Fluency and comprehension are also integral components of effective speaking. Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and without hesitation, while comprehension refers to the understanding of spoken language. Both of these factors are closely interconnected, as fluent speakers are generally better at understanding spoken language, and vice versa. To improve fluency, students need to engage in consistent speaking practice, including spontaneous conversations that allow them to process and respond to information in real-time. Additionally, listening to native speakers and engaging in discussions can help students improve their comprehension and adapt to different speech patterns and accents.

The research draws upon existing theories and studies to contextualize the importance of speaking skills in language learning. Speaking is often considered one of the most challenging skills for second language learners to develop. However, it is also one of the most crucial, as it directly impacts students' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. Theories on language acquisition emphasize the importance of practice and interaction in developing speaking skills. For example, interactionist theories suggest that language acquisition is best achieved through communicative interactions that provide opportunities for learners to practice speaking in authentic contexts. In line with these theories, the research aims to evaluate the speaking abilities of students and provide recommendations for improving their speaking proficiency.

The study identifies a gap in existing research by focusing specifically on the speaking skills of students within an English Education Study Program. While much research has focused on general language learners or younger students, there is a need for more research on university-level students who are pursuing careers in language teaching. These students are expected to have a higher level of proficiency, yet many still face challenges in speaking. The research will provide valuable data on the current state of speaking skills among these students and suggest practical strategies for improving their proficiency.

This research aims to assess the speaking skills of students in the English Education Study Program, identify areas of weakness, and explore the factors that influence speaking proficiency. Through the use of a speaking test assessment rubric, the study will provide a detailed analysis of the students' speaking abilities and offer insights into how to improve speaking skills. The findings will contribute to the development of more effective teaching methods that address the specific challenges students face in developing their speaking proficiency, ultimately helping students become more confident and capable English speakers.

Table 1 Speaking Test Assessment Rubric (Brown, 2004)

No	Assessment aspect		
	Aspect	Score	Description
1.	Pronunciation	5	Easy to understand and has a native accent
		4	Easy to understand even with a certain accent
		3	There are pronunciation problems that make the listener have to full concentration and sometimes there are misunderstandings
		2	Difficult to understand because there are pronunciation problems, often asked to repeat
		1	Pronunciation problems are so serious that it cannot be understood
2.	Grammar	5	No or few grammatical errors
		4	Occasionally makes grammatical errors but does not affect the meaning Frequently makes grammatical errors that affect meaning



		3	Many grammatical errors that impede meaning and often rearranges sentences
		2	Grammar errors are so severe that they are difficult to understand
		1	
3.	Vocabulary	5	Uses vocabulary and expressions like a native speaker
		4	Occasionally uses inappropriate vocabulary
		3	Frequently uses inappropriate vocabulary, conversation is limited due to limited vocabulary
		2	Uses vocabulary incorrectly and has limited vocabulary so that it is difficult to understand
		1	Vocabulary is so limited that conversation is impossible
4.	Fluency	5	Fluent like a native speaker
		4	Fluency appears slightly impaired by language problems
		3	Fluency somewhat impaired by language problems
		2	Frequent hesitations and halts due to language limitations
		1	Speech is disjointed and halting so that conversation is not possible.
5.	Understanding	5	Understand all without difficulty
		4	Understand almost everything, although there is repetition in certain parts.
		3	Understand most of what is said when speech is slightly slowed down despite repetition
		2	Have difficulty following what is said
		1	Cannot understand even simple conversations

2. Method

The research method used in this research is a quantitative research. According to Williams, Malcolm, et al. (2022), quantitative research is defined as investigation in which the data that are collected and coded are expressible as numbers. The aspects assessed by the researcher about speaking skills are in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, etc. Skills are in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The score given starts from score one to score five, as table 1 regarding the assessment rubric below.

The subjects of this research were students of the class B of 5th Semester in English Education Study Program in University of Nias. The students were interviewed to answer 5 questions orally and directly. All of students in class B were taken as the sample. This process was followed by cluster sampling by choose all of the students in the class. To obtain data, researcher interviews all respondents by give 5 questions to be answered directly. Through answering questions, researcher will analyse the students speaking skill from their answers. As long as interview, the researcher record the answer of respondents to be analysed by researcher. The fifth questions given are:

- (1) Would you like to tell me a little about yourself?
- (2) How do you feel about being a student in English Education Study Program?
- (3) How can you improve your speaking skill?
- (4) What do you think about AI?
- (5) What is your suggestion or advice for who are learning English?

Through these questions, the respondents will perform their arguments of the questions, and their speaking skill can show in answering those questions, the data collection process in this research involved the interview method. Interview method is method to collect data by speak directly to the respondents in this research. The data collection began with making 5 question to asked for the respondents, each question was designed carefully to represent relevant question of the topic that can perform student' speaking skill in answering those questions. The question was designed to make the respondents use their own words to convey their own opinion about something.

After the data was collected, the data analysis process was carried out using descriptive statistics analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis is analysis that provides description of data for all independent and dependent variables (Damayanti & Al Musadieq, 2017). Descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyse all of answer from respondents. Next, the researcher judge or determine their score based on Speaking Test Assessment Rubric. Therefore, this research used qualitative methods. Data was collected using a survey method with a interview as the main instrument for collecting data from class B, fifth semester students of the Nias University English Education study program.



3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The speaking skill test conducted with 41 students in the fifth semester of the English Education Study Program offers valuable insights into the students' abilities to express their opinions in English. This particular test focused on the students' ability to communicate through interviews, providing a practical measure of their speaking proficiency. Interviews, as an assessment tool, are a suitable choice for evaluating speaking skills, as they simulate real-life conversational contexts where individuals must think on their feet, formulate responses, and engage in meaningful communication. However, while the results provide important data about the students' current speaking abilities, a critical analysis of these results, as well as the test design and its implications, is necessary for a deeper understanding of students' challenges and potential areas for improvement.

First and foremost, the fact that 41 students participated in this study is a reasonable sample size for gaining a general understanding of the cohort's speaking abilities. However, it is important to note that the test only measures one aspect of speaking—expressing opinions through interviews. While this is an essential skill, speaking proficiency encompasses several dimensions, including fluency, pronunciation, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary range. Therefore, the results from this test should be viewed as a partial reflection of the students' overall speaking abilities. To provide a more comprehensive evaluation, the test could have incorporated additional tasks that assess different aspects of speaking, such as group discussions, individual presentations, or storytelling exercises.

In analysing the students' performance based on the results obtained from the test, one must consider the specific challenges students may face in interviews. Expressing opinions in English requires not only a solid understanding of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to organize thoughts, articulate ideas clearly, and respond appropriately in a conversational setting. Students may face linguistic barriers such as a limited vocabulary or difficulty constructing grammatically correct sentences. Additionally, psychological factors such as anxiety or fear of making mistakes can affect their performance. These factors could contribute to varying levels of performance across the group, as some students may feel more comfortable and confident expressing their thoughts than others. Consequently, it is crucial to acknowledge that speaking skills are not only influenced by linguistic knowledge but also by psychological readiness and self-confidence, both of which could have impacted students' performance in the test.

Another important consideration is the context in which the speaking skill test was conducted. If students were assessed in a formal, high-pressure setting, it could have contributed to nervousness, which may have affected their ability to perform at their best. On the other hand, a more relaxed, informal setting might have encouraged more natural communication and led to better results. It is important to account for these situational factors when interpreting the data. Furthermore, the testing method—interviews—may not fully capture the students' ability to interact in other communicative contexts, such as group discussions or spontaneous conversations, which are also important in language learning.

The test's design is also worth considering in terms of its alignment with real-world language use. Interviews, while useful, may not always simulate the variety of speaking situations that students will encounter in the real world. For example, students may struggle in more unpredictable, dynamic contexts that require quick thinking, multitasking, and adaptability. A more diverse range of speaking activities could provide a better understanding of students' overall speaking proficiency. Additionally, the test could benefit from clearer rubrics to evaluate different aspects of performance, such as fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy. This would help to provide a more detailed and nuanced assessment of the students' speaking abilities.

While the speaking skill test administered to the 41 students provides important insights into their ability to express opinions in English, it is essential to approach the results with a critical lens. The test measures only one facet of speaking and may be influenced by various factors such as anxiety and the students' confidence levels. Moreover, the test design, which focuses on interviews, could be expanded to assess a wider range of speaking skills in different contexts. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' speaking proficiency, future assessments should consider incorporating diverse speaking tasks, clearer evaluation criteria, and a more holistic approach to language assessment that takes both linguistic and psychological factors into account.

Table 2 Results of Speaking Skills Class B 5th Semester English Education Study Program

No.	Students	Pronunciation	Grammar	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Total
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1.	Erta	4	4	4	5	4	21
2.	Ester	3	3	4	3	3	16
3.	Etika	2	2	3	2	3	12
4.	Etikat	3	4	3	3	4	17
5.	Feliks	4	4	4	5	4	21
6.	Fetry	3	3	2	3	3	14
7.	Fister	3	3	3	3	2	14
8.	Grace	3	3	2	3	3	14
9.	Hanna	2	2	2	2	3	11
10.	Hermin	3	3	3	3	3	15
11.	Herni	2	3	3	2	3	13
12.	Ika	3	3	3	3	4	16
13.	Indy	2	2	2	3	3	12
14.	Jernih	3	2	3	2	2	12
15.	Jessica	3	2	3	2	2	12
16.	Julas	3	2	3	3	3	14
17.	Jumy	3	2	3	3	3	14
18.	Juny	3	3	3	3	4	16
19.	Liber	3	3	3	3	4	16
20.	Linda	3	3	3	3	3	15
21.	Lisnah	4	3	3	4	4	18
22.	Lynes	3	3	3	3	3	15
23.	Martin	4	4	4	4	4	20
24.	Nibato	4	4	4	4	4	20
25.	Puspa	2	3	3	3	3	14
26.	Riatta	4	4	4	4	4	20
27.	Robin	3	2	3	3	4	15
28.	Ros	3	3	3	3	3	15
29.	Rut	2	3	2	2	2	11
30.	Sensi	2	2	3	2	2	11
31.	Septin	2	2	2	2	2	10
32.	Septrida	2	2	3	2	2	11
33.	Syukur	2	3	2	2	3	12
34.	Taty	2	2	2	2	3	11
35.	Wince	3	3	3	3	3	15
36.	Yarlin	2	2	3	2	3	12
37.	Yarlin N.	4	3	3	4	4	18
38.	Yarman	4	4	4	5	4	21
39.	Yasmin	3	2	2	3	3	13
40.	Yestan	4	4	4	5	4	21
41.	Yohanna	4	4	4	5	4	21

Mean scores

The mean scores of samples above are:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\text{data sum}}{\text{number of data values}}$$

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{21+16+12+17+21+14+14+14+11+15+13+16+12+12+12+14+14+16+16+15+18+15+20+20+14+20+15+15+11+11+10+11+12+11+15+12+18+21+13+21+21}{41}$$

$$= \frac{619}{41}$$

$$= 15,09$$

The students' score can be interpreted in the frequency table 3 below.

Table 3 frequency tables of students' scores



No.	Score	<i>f</i>
1.	10	1
2.	11	5
3.	12	6
4.	13	2
5.	14	6
6.	15	6
7.	16	4
8.	17	1
9.	18	2
10.	20	3
10.	21	5
Total		41

Mode scores

The mode of students' scores is **12, 14 and 16**.

Table 4 Score category

Score category	
Score scale	Category
21-25	Very good
16-20	Good
11-15	Enough
6-10	Not enough
0-5	Bad

3.2 Discussion

The data presented reveals a clear distribution of English-speaking skills among students, highlighting varying levels of proficiency. Five students are categorized as "Very Good," ten as "Good," twenty-five as "Enough," and one student falls under the "Not Enough" category. This distribution underscores the differences in speaking competence despite years of English instruction, indicating that challenges remain in developing effective speaking skills. The fact that many students fall into the "Enough" and "Not Enough" categories suggests a need for further investigation into the factors hindering their speaking abilities.

Speaking skills are crucial in language learning, as they serve as a tangible indicator of proficiency in English. The speaking test, as part of this study, plays a central role in assessing a student's ability to communicate in English. While the data shows a significant number of students who have reached an adequate level of speaking ability, there are still barriers preventing others from excelling in this area. These barriers are often complex, involving both linguistic and non-linguistic challenges.

Linguistic challenges, including difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, are common among students learning English as a second language. Vocabulary issues are especially prominent, as students may struggle to recall and use the right words during conversations. Limited vocabulary can impede fluency and hinder the ability to express ideas effectively. Grammar, too, is a common struggle, as students often make errors in sentence construction, tenses, and word order, which affect the clarity of their communication. Additionally, pronunciation issues can cause misunderstandings, making it difficult for listeners to comprehend the speaker's message, further diminishing the student's confidence in speaking.

Non-linguistic factors, such as psychological barriers, also significantly impact speaking performance. Many students experience anxiety about making mistakes, fear of judgment, or lack of confidence, especially in public speaking situations. Haidara (2016) notes that Indonesian students, in particular, face psychological obstacles like shyness and hesitation, which inhibit their willingness to engage in English conversation. This is further exacerbated by the lack of speaking practice opportunities and the absence of a supportive environment in which students feel comfortable speaking freely.

The anxiety and fear of failure experienced by students can create a vicious cycle. When students fear making mistakes, they may avoid speaking in English altogether, thereby missing out on opportunities to practice and improve. This reluctance to speak can lead to stagnation in their speaking proficiency, making it more challenging to reach higher levels of fluency. Furthermore, cultural factors, such as the emphasis on perfectionism in educational settings, may contribute to the avoidance of



speaking activities, as students may feel that they need to speak flawlessly before engaging in conversation.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to create an environment that fosters motivation, reduces anxiety, and encourages continuous practice. Teachers can play a pivotal role by employing teaching methods that build students' confidence and create a supportive classroom atmosphere. One effective approach is to integrate communicative activities, such as role-plays, debates, and group discussions, where students can practice speaking in a relaxed and non-threatening setting. Additionally, providing positive reinforcement and constructive feedback can help students overcome their fear of mistakes and encourage them to keep improving.

Beyond the classroom, students can benefit from supplementary activities that promote speaking practice. Encouraging students to find language partners, engage in language exchange programs, or participate in online conversations with native speakers can provide them with more opportunities to practice real-life communication. Watching videos, listening to podcasts, and singing English songs are also valuable tools for improving pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency in a fun and engaging manner. Improving speaking skills in English requires addressing both linguistic and non-linguistic barriers. Teachers and learners alike need to recognize that proficiency in speaking is a gradual process that requires consistent effort and practice. By adopting effective teaching strategies, fostering a supportive learning environment, and encouraging out-of-class practice, students can overcome the obstacles they face and make significant progress in their English-speaking abilities.

4. Conclusion

The findings from this study provide important insights into the current state of English-speaking proficiency among students, revealing that more than 50% of students—specifically 63.4%—still face considerable challenges when it comes to speaking English. This highlights a significant issue in the learning process, as English speaking is one of the most essential skills for students to master, especially for those learning it as a second language. Despite years of English instruction, the majority of students have yet to reach a level of proficiency that allows them to communicate comfortably and effectively in English. This finding serves as a crucial starting point for understanding the barriers to speaking proficiency and provides a foundation for further research.

The primary difficulty for many students appears to stem from both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Linguistic factors such as limited vocabulary, improper grammar, and issues with pronunciation are often at the heart of students' struggles. Vocabulary deficits can cause students to hesitate or become stuck in conversation, making it harder for them to express their ideas clearly. Grammar issues, particularly with verb tenses, sentence structures, and word order, often lead to confusion and can make it difficult for others to understand their intended message. Similarly, pronunciation problems, which may range from mispronouncing individual words to having an accent that makes it hard for native or fluent speakers to understand, create additional barriers to effective communication. These linguistic barriers can severely hinder students' confidence and willingness to speak, as they may feel embarrassed or self-conscious about making mistakes in front of others.

Non-linguistic factors also play a significant role in students' speaking difficulties. One of the most notable of these factors is psychological in nature, such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence. Many students report feeling nervous when speaking English, particularly in front of their peers or teachers. This anxiety can be exacerbated by a fear of being judged or ridiculed for not speaking perfectly. As a result, many students tend to avoid speaking opportunities altogether, further hindering their ability to improve. This fear of failure often leads to a lack of practice, which is essential for gaining fluency in any language. Additionally, cultural factors, such as a fear of embarrassment or a tendency to avoid public speaking, can exacerbate these challenges, making it even harder for students to build the confidence necessary to communicate in English.

Given the significant number of students still struggling with English-speaking skills, the findings suggest a need for targeted interventions and a re-evaluation of existing teaching methods. It is clear that the current instructional approaches may not be fully addressing the diverse needs of students when it comes to language acquisition, particularly in the area of speaking. Further research is necessary to explore effective teaching strategies that can help overcome the barriers identified in this study. Teachers and educators must consider incorporating more interactive and communicative methods into their curriculum, such as role-playing exercises, group discussions, and peer-to-peer conversations, which encourage students to engage actively and practice speaking in a supportive environment. These



methods can help students feel more comfortable with speaking and reduce the anxiety that often accompanies speaking English in front of others.

Additionally, addressing students' psychological barriers, such as fear and anxiety, is crucial. Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment where students feel encouraged to speak without the fear of making mistakes is essential. This can be achieved by fostering a culture of positive reinforcement, where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process, rather than something to be ashamed of. Offering constructive feedback and celebrating progress, no matter how small, can help students build confidence and motivation to continue practicing.

Finally, the study's findings highlight the need for continuous practice outside of the classroom. Encouraging students to engage in English-speaking activities beyond their regular lessons, such as language exchange programs, watching English-language media, or even practicing speaking with friends or family members, can help them improve their skills and gain more exposure to the language. By creating an environment that promotes ongoing speaking practice, students can develop the fluency and confidence needed to communicate effectively in English.

The study's findings reveal that a significant portion of students still struggle with their English-speaking skills, with more than 63% facing various linguistic and non-linguistic barriers. This issue requires immediate attention, as speaking skills are critical to mastering a language. The findings suggest that more research is needed to explore effective teaching methods and interventions that can help students overcome these challenges and improve their speaking proficiency. By addressing both linguistic and psychological factors and incorporating more engaging and supportive teaching methods, educators can help students develop the skills they need to succeed in English communication.

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