

## *An overall assessment of university students' challenges in speaking English as a foreign language (EFL)*

Meryem Karlik ✉

Tashkent State Transport University, Uzbekistan

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6891-8761>

[drmerkem@gmail.com](mailto:drmerkem@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Speaking is often considered the most effective method for students to acquire and use English as a foreign language. Unfortunately, university students find it difficult to master this speaking competence. Therefore, this study focuses on the challenges faced by university students learning to speak English as a foreign language. Literature research methodology was adopted and the author gathered information from various books, journals, e-books, and other studies to collect the data for this project. The results and recommendations indicate that hurdles to speaking English for foreign learners include fear and lack of motivation, limited exposure to English, disparities in grammar and phonology, and the process of acquiring speaking skills. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the speaking abilities of university students learning English as a foreign language.

*Keywords:* speaking English; challenges; foreign language

### 1. Introduction

English is still regarded as one of the most crucial languages to learn for communication at the present time. Since English is designated as a world language, it is utilized as a medium for communication all over the world (Crystal, 2003). Everyone wants to be able to speak English like a native speaker, especially when

English may be a second or foreign language in a nation. However, speaking English is not so simple; therefore we must also pay attention to the speaking characteristics of vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, comprehension, and grammar to ensure effective communication. Speaking a foreign language is frequently regarded as being more challenging than reading, writing, and listening. According to Bailey (2005), speaking is perceived as a more difficult skill due to two reasons. First, speaking occurs in real-time, unlike reading or writing. In other words, the person we are speaking to is actively listening and awaiting their turn to respond. We often engage in spontaneous conversation without extensive planning and frequently seek immediate feedback from our conversation partner. Second, once we speak, there are limited options for modifying our output, as we cannot go back and change what we have said. In essence, we have limited time for planning, constructing, and revising our spoken message. Students lack proficiency in English, as they face difficulties in communicating despite being able to pass exams without trouble. It is crucial to find solutions to these issues in order to help students develop their speaking skills. Additionally, teachers need to be aware of the factors that impact their students' speaking abilities, so they can address them and facilitate improvement of these abilities.

Speaking fluently in the target language is typically regarded as a major indicator of a learner's proficiency. Students will certainly be able to speak English well and their listeners will be able to understand a message or main point from the words that are spoken by the speakers if everything is done well, including memorization of the words every day, doing a great deal of practice, and knowing a grammatical point well. Students must memorize numerous English words and phrases, know how to pronounce the words correctly, and be able to construct effective sentences by understanding grammatical concepts in order to be able to speak English (Lail, 2018). The issue is seen as involving more than just the teaching strategies used by instructors to impart the four language abilities of speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). As students play a pivotal role in the learning process, it is acknowledged that certain challenges may stem from the students themselves. The most significant problem is that many students will refuse to speak when asked to do so in class for a variety of reasons, including embarrassment, fear of making a mistake, lack of preparation, ignorance of language-related concepts, and non-linguistic influences on speaking abilities (Aprianto & Haerazi, 2019). Cognitive or psychological issues are also likely to be the root of EFL students' trouble speaking English (Ariyanti, 2016, p.78). Students' capacity to develop their speaking skills is also hampered by the psychological barrier. Due to psychological obstacles, they will not be as engaged and active in class.

One of the key things for students to understand is that speaking competence also includes strategies for learning to speak English. To help them to speak

English more fluently, a number of techniques and strategies can be used. In order to select the best techniques for themselves, students should be able to identify their strengths and shortcomings. It is possible for every learner to have a unique strategy. The methods that pupils employ to acquire the language will impact how well they are able to converse in English. Students will be able to resolve many issues with speaking English if they employ efficient tactics that help them feel at ease when communicating in English. According to Oxford (1990), a learning strategy is any unique action, behavior, step, or technique that students employ to enhance their learning. Examples include seeking discussion partners or providing support to get through a challenging language exercise.

According to Aldarasi (2020), there are a variety of reasons why students have difficulty speaking English, including their age, gender, motivation, self-confidence, language learning strategy (LLS), and also the surroundings within which they are learning the language. Teachers' approaches, parental participation, the accessibility of language materials, and evaluation techniques are a few examples of these external elements. Benson and Gao (2008) contend that students' language learning results can be influenced by each innate (such as gender, age, personality, and learning style) and acquired characteristics (such as motivation, beliefs, and technique use). The aim of this research is to address students' challenges while speaking a foreign language. The following issues are touched upon in this article: English speaking skills, challenges of speaking English, strategies for overcoming English speaking challenges, and relevant studies on challenges in speaking English as a foreign language.

## 2. English speaking skills

Speaking is the act of utilizing language to interact with others through conveying thoughts, feelings, and ideas as well as exchanging facts. This is consistent with what Prabawa (2016, p. 232) argues with respect to speaking as a tool for interpersonal communication. Speaking is an interactive act in which the speaker engages and expresses ideas, emotions, and thoughts through language. Through conversation, he or she also conveys information to others, creating a clear, understandable sentence structure and linguistic expression. Additionally, students must learn to use language in a way that reflects the context in which it is being used.

According to Febriyanti (2011), speaking is the process by which individuals convert their thoughts into verbal and nonverbal communication. Since speaking allows one to gauge another's language proficiency, students today must acquire speaking abilities when learning the English language (Nazara, 2011). According to Djiwandono (2008, p.121), language skills can be broadly divided into

two groups: receptive (comprehension), which includes listening and reading, and productive (creating), which includes speaking and writing. Students who have a sufficient command of the English language can communicate their thoughts, feelings, and desires both verbally and in writing, as well as discover the necessary knowledge that is necessary for the advancement of modern society. Speaking involves thinking and reasoning so that the listener or other participants in the discourse to accept and fully comprehend the speaker (Rintaningrum, 2018). Speaking and listening abilities are tightly intertwined and they form on whole.

Students in higher education are not the only ones who occasionally have trouble speaking English. This occurs because they are not accustomed to speaking English as a language of communication in daily activities and because it is a foreign language to them. It is also challenging for pupils to speak English because of the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of English terms that differ greatly from those in their native tongues. However, there are numerous methods for overcoming the challenges of speaking English.

### 3. Challenges of speaking English

Students' challenges in speaking English might be attributed to a variety of issues. Problems with speech can prevent someone from being able to talk. In fact, one of the main causes of low academic achievement is language difficulties. These issues could end up impeding the pupils' capacity to develop and advance their speaking skills. Poor grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are the main causes of pupils' speaking issues. These issues are language-related. According to Juhana (2012a, pp. 64-68), there are three different categories of linguistic issues, including: (a) pronunciation, (b) a lack of vocabulary, and (c) grammar. Language difficulties are mentioned by Saragih and Listyani (2021) as one of the primary factors contributing to poor academic achievement. This assertion is supported by a body of research in the field. According to Snow and Uccelli (2009), language proficiency is intricately linked to academic success, and students facing challenges in language acquisition often encounter obstacles in grasping academic content. Furthermore, Cummins (1981) emphasizes the critical role of language in cognitive development and academic performance, highlighting how language proficiency is essential for effective learning across various subjects. Many learners continue to have great difficulty using this skill. According to Thornbury (2005), pronunciation describes a student's capacity to create understandable utterances to complete the task requirements. Hughes (2002) defined fluency as the ability of students to talk in an intelligible manner to prevent communication breakdown due to listeners' potential loss of interest.

When one has few options for vocabulary, learning a new language is more difficult. Ineffective communication among students learning English as a foreign language is significantly hampered by a lack of words (Ghalebi et al., 2021). Kusumawardani (2018) argues that to speak fluently and precisely in a foreign language, students need to possess a significant understanding of vocabulary and the capacity to use it appropriately.

Psychological issues constitute another obstacle that could prevent students from becoming proficient English speakers. Such issues frequently affect individuals' relationships, work productivity, and ability to respond to life events such as being anxious, lacking self-confidence, and speaking in public. Students' speaking abilities may suffer as a result of these issues. There are also five different psychological elements, according to Juhana (2012b, p. 101), including anxiety, mistaken fear, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), learners frequently complain about their inability to present themselves in the right way due to a lack of enthusiasm and their inability to recall anything they want to say. Additionally, one of the issues with learning to speak in a foreign language is the mother tongue of the student. According to Goh and Burns (2012), anxiety has a detrimental impact on the learning process, and anxious students perceive speaking a foreign language as unpleasant. Due to this experience, students are discouraged and tend to avoid or withdraw from engaging in active conversations. Every time students struggle to articulate their ideas, even in very straightforward phrases, they tend to lose interest in their studies and desire to stop trying. Fear of making mistakes results in an internal lack of enthusiasm to speak English (Irmawati, 2016). Making a mistake induces a verbal nightmare. Generally speaking, intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate students to continually engage in and dedicate themselves to learning English (Azlan et al., 2019).

#### 4. Strategies for overcoming English speaking challenges

When learning a foreign language, students use strategies that help them to become fluent in that language. English-language issues can be resolved in a variety of ways. The strategies for learning a foreign language are classified into two main groups, and each of these groups has some subgroups (Oxford, 1990):

1. *Direct strategies* are divided into memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensatory strategies (Oxford, 1990). *Memory strategies* help students recall things better and transfer knowledge that is necessary for language use. Additionally, memory techniques encourage students to retain

critical knowledge learned during their studies. These techniques relate to how learners retain language; in this case, retaining challenging grammar requires repeatedly going over it and incorporating new words into sentences. *Cognitive strategies* can assist students in understanding and speaking a new language through a variety of actions, including joining a foreign language club and making friends with native or advanced language speakers. Students can also practice their pronunciation by saying English words aloud repeatedly. Utilizing their mother tongue when they do not know an English word, miming, gesturing, or moving their bodies physically, and utilizing synonyms are just a few examples of *compensatory strategies* that help pupils make up for limited knowledge. For example, the student might use body language to communicate the message to the individual being asked for help if they do not know the target language for "open the window."

2. *Indirect strategies* are divided into as metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990). By monitoring and analyzing their learning, *metacognitive strategies* help students plan language learning effectively. For example, creating a schedule for speaking English activities is the first step in helping students become more fluent in the language. The students' speaking abilities will be assessed in the following stage to ascertain how much they have progressed. *Affective strategies* describe techniques that can be utilized to help pupils better manage or develop their emotions. A student needs to keep their emotions under control because this can affect their ability to learn in a way that is both fruitful and fun. Students learning a new language, which can be very stressful, should pay particular attention to this issue. By employing emotional coping techniques, including taking a few slow, deep breaths before speaking, these students may be able to get over their anxiety. Affective strategies can motivate students to view their errors, no matter how embarrassing they may be, positively when they are learning a new language. They will still be optimistic about the experience of learning a new language, although it might be difficult for them. Due to their ongoing learning difficulties, individuals will believe that what they are doing is normal for them even if they make mistakes. Finally, social strategies engage other people in language learning and can boost students' proficiency in the target language by promoting interaction with others, especially native speakers. It is suggested that students comprehend how they talk, how to understand grammatical principles, how to ask questions, and how to evaluate comments from native speakers.

## 5. Relevant studies on challenges in speaking English as a foreign language

Numerous studies have examined the challenges of speaking English in educational settings. Yazıcı and Bavlı (2022) investigated the speaking difficulties of the students in an English preparatory class in the spring semester of 2020-2021 at a private university in Istanbul. The study's methodology used a qualitative classroom action research strategy. Speaking skills difficulties among the students were observed during the first few weeks of the spring semester. Consequently, utilizing Ur's (2009) recommendations, an action plan was created. For eight weeks, the developed action plan was carried out. Using a purposive sample technique called homogeneous sampling, participants were selected. Both the active participant observer approach and the email interview technique were used to gather the data. The outcome was the identification of two themes, referred to as emotive improvements and practical improvements, each with three sub-themes. The supporting themes were examination, better self-efficacy, higher motivation, enhanced engagement, and reduced anxiety. This study demonstrates that students benefitted from the implementation of the action plan based on Ur's (2009) recommendations.

Utami and Kusumastuti (2022) looked at how students feel about feedback from lecturers regarding their speaking skills. The study was a part of larger project examining how people feel about various things. 35 students from a private university in Purwokerto's English Education Department served as the study's sample population. Additionally, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/reduction techniques were used to assess the interview data. The findings showed that the pupils had favorable opinions about the lecturer's comments regarding their speaking abilities. Interview data also revealed the value of the lecturer's comments because they enabled the students to improve their approach to learning how to speak in English.

Ruslin et al. (2022) conducted a study to learn more about the speaking abilities that students in the English Department (ED) develop. The study's findings indicated that most ED students had trouble speaking English proficiently. It also demonstrated how many ED students struggled to talk because of their limited vocabulary, lack of self-assurance, and weak grammar skills. The research has implications for lecturers and other educational stakeholders in Islamic higher education, and these implications include providing a well-designed curriculum that introduces the use of technology from which lecturers might create effective lesson plans together with appropriate resources and media to improve the English-speaking abilities of the ED students.

Al-Hassaani (2022) identified the biggest obstacles Saudi female EFL learners encountered in developing their English-speaking abilities. Saudi EFL students

who attempted to speak English in and outside of the classroom felt frightened and afraid of making mistakes since there wasn't enough practice, motivation, and support from the teachers' side to help them improve their speaking abilities. The researcher suggested that, in order to satisfy the needs of students in their everyday lives and the expectations of the labor market, the curriculum and instructional materials for English-speaking skills courses need to be improved.

Thao and Trung (2022) looked into the speaking challenges of fourth-year students at Thai Nguyen University. Three linguistic issues (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary) as well as three psychological issues (attitude, anxiety and motivation) were revealed. The study's conclusions showed that students are more likely to experience linguistic than psychological challenges. Lack of grammatical knowledge was identified as the most prevalent issue, followed by vocabulary and worry. Additionally, the study's findings showed that Thai Nguyen University's EFL students do not struggle with pronunciation. The results also demonstrate that the participants were very motivated to speak English and have favorable views.

Oktavia and Lestari (2022) attempted to determine how the students felt about utilizing the English Domino game to practice their English. The findings showed that using the English domino games boosted the students' enthusiasm to practice speaking in English. While playing English Domino, the majority of the participants felt at ease and confident in speaking. Additionally, they were eager and inspired to take turns narrating tales.

Urwat et al. (2022) carried out a study in Pakistan at the NUST Balochistan Campus. This research found that the most common issue faced by the university students was a lack of confidence when speaking the English language, which was ranked first, followed by a lack of vocabulary, a fear of making mistakes when speaking the language, a lack of motivation to speak the language, a feeling of anxiety when speaking the language in front of others, shyness, worrying about issues related to differences in syntax and lack of English teachers. It was determined that Pakistani university students experience significant difficulties speaking English, and that these difficulties should be resolved by taking appropriate actions.

Harya (2022) tried to recognize and characterize the issues that pupils have when speaking English. The findings indicated that when presenting seminar proposals and final examinations or munaqosyah, the majority of upper level students struggled to speak English fluently. They did not have enough vocabulary or grammar knowledge, which would affect their pronunciation and confidence, and they were overly concerned about making mistakes during their presentations.

Desnaranti and Putra (2022) conducted a study to find out how undergraduate students, particularly those who majored in non-English languages, perceived the difficulty of speaking English. According to the study's findings, there are linguistic, psychological, social, and lecturer factors that contribute to



students' difficulty speaking English. The study concluded that the undergraduate students can overcome these challenges if they are fully aware of the nature of these challenges. In another study, Amiruddin (2022) examined the difficulties of non-native speakers when speaking English. The analysis showed that these difficulties were related to limited exposure to English, differences in grammar and phonology, as well as anxiety, and motivation.

Octoberlina et al. (2022) investigated the difficulties that students have when speaking English and the steps they took to overcome those difficulties. The study's findings showed that a number of students encountered psychological challenges when speaking English, including anxiety, a lack of confidence, concerns about making mistakes and ridicule. Additionally, it was observed that they struggle with vocabulary selection, lack a solid understanding of syntax, and are unsure of the word order in English. One of the challenges pupils faced was a lack of speaking practice. To overcome their difficulties speaking English, the students were encouraged to use the strategies included in Oxford's (1999) *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning*.

Doğan (2021) looked into the speaking issues that students face in online learning from the viewpoints of ELT teachers in Turkey. The findings indicated that the main challenges included making mistakes, receiving feedback that is negative or embarrassing, and lacking the confidence to communicate in English. Students having trouble with proper pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary constituted another group facing challenges in speaking. Many pupils also lacked adequate levels of reading and listening comprehension, which prevented them from understanding English passages.

Emirza and Sahril (2021) tried to understand how students' personality, namely their level of introversion, affects how well they speak English and how they communicate at Ibn Khaldun University Bogor. Data analysis showed that depression was the psychological element that had the greatest impact (92%) on introverted students' speaking abilities. Eight out of thirteen pupils that were exposed to the linguistics elements reported that vocabulary and grammar were the main issues. Additionally, pronunciation issues were reported by six out of thirteen students.

Drawing on mixed methods, Huyen (2021) investigated the practices used by Vietnamese EFL students to improve their autonomy when speaking English. 102 English-majoring students, ranging in age from freshmen to seniors, took part in the study at a university in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The analysis showed that the participants manifested an average level of autonomy in developing their speaking skills, indicating both their successes and the challenges they faced.

Handini et al. (2021) examined the students' struggles with speaking English at MTS NW Al Hidayah Baremayung. The results of the study indicate that the

following factors contributed to students' difficulty in speaking English, particularly with respect to introducing themselves: poor vocabulary skills, difficulty in pronouncing some words that were written in a different way, problems with word order and fear of making mistakes. The students also lacked confidence and were anxious.

In a private institution in Central Java, Saragih and Listyani (2021) attempted to pinpoint the challenges faced by the second-year students in an academic speaking class. Speaking English correctly, managing nervousness, responding spontaneously, picking up foreign accents, communicating ideas, finding the suitable lexicon, arranging the right grammatical patterns, and coping with a competitive environment were eight problems uncovered in this study. On the whole, the students' lack of confidence and their limited vocabulary were the elements that contributed to their difficulty in speaking.

Using YouTube, Pujiani et al. (2021) attempted to increase students' self-confidence so they could overcome their English-speaking difficulties. According to the study's findings, students who participated in this project demonstrated an improvement in their speaking abilities and an increase in their self-confidence. Furthermore, a paired *t*-test demonstrated that the differences were statistically significant. Thus, it can be inferred that using YouTube as a platform for language instruction is successful in boosting students' speaking performance and self-confidence.

Manurung (2020) evaluated students' English speaking proficiency and the difficulties they encountered in the Department of English Education at the University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara using a descriptive qualitative design. The findings indicated that the students themselves posed the greatest challenge to their speaking performances. There were many speaking mistakes. Misused forms (44.8%), improper omissions (33.6%), and misplaced and unclear words (21.2%) were the three areas in which errors predominated. When it comes to external factors, updated instructional techniques should be used to limit the use of the native tongue by implementing different types of speaking performance, cooperating with other instructors, and sharing experiences related to teaching speaking.

Ratnasari (2020) addressed the difficulties students had while developing speaking skills and the solutions they came up with. The findings revealed four types of difficulty, including poor grammatical understanding, anxiety, a hostile environment, and a lack of vocabulary. The student applied five strategies to deal with such issues: code-switching, viewing the audiences as statues, using Google translate tools, approaching the English teacher personally, and motivating themselves.

Hamad and Seyyedi (2020) sought to determine the causes of students' speaking deficiencies and the difficulties that some students encounter when communicating verbally in the English Department of the Faculty of Arts at Soran University. The results showed that linguistic issues accounted for 36.42% of

the causes underlying English speaking problems, with affective and social components accounting for 35.63% and 27.95%, respectively.

Ariani (2020) explored the difficulties with speaking English in group presentations that the Polytechnic of Raflesia's Electrical Engineering Department students encounter. The study found that the participants' poor pronunciation was their main linguistic difficulty when speaking English. Out of 27 students, 16 (59, 26%) admitted experiencing this problem. At the same time, 15 students (55, 56%) reported having anxiety when using the target language, which was the main psycholinguistic issue.

Lingga et al. (2020) set out to determine the barriers to speaking English that students faced and the methods they employed to get around these barriers. According to the study's findings, students struggle while speaking English due to a lack of vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, poor word pronunciation, fear of other people's reactions, anxiety when making mistakes, low self-esteem, and embarrassment. Students' coping strategies include seeking assistance from others, attempting to form phrases in various ways by utilizing gestures, and adopting principles for positive thinking. In a nutshell, it may be said that pupils perceive speaking English as challenging.

Kashmiri (2019) presents the results of research on the issues faced by Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) learners and to develop some solutions to these problems. These students' difficulties with speaking had previously been dealt with by addressing the issues of weaknesses in teacher development and education, learner autonomy, a lack of materials and technology in the EFL classrooms, and anxiety related to learning a foreign language. The aim of the project was to ask the Saudi EFL students themselves for solutions to the difficulties in speaking English. This was accomplished using a sample of 66 students who were enrolled in the first year of an intensive preparatory English course. The results help pinpoint reasons why speaking English was difficult for Saudi EFL students, which has the potential to find effective solutions.

Pertiwi and Suwartono (2019) investigated the speaking strategies employed by tertiary students learning English as a foreign language. According to this survey, many pupils struggled with more than one aspect of speaking. Insufficient vocabulary (55.93%), poor grammar (51.9%), and poor pronunciation (25.6%) represented difficulties that were linguistic in nature; psychological issues were lack of desire to improve (55.8%), fear of making mistakes (52.6%), anxiety (49.35%), lack of confidence (43.6%), and shyness (34.6%). The pupils used several techniques to overcome those obstacles. The analysis showed that the most common strategies were affective (67.53%), followed by memory (67.25%), compensatory strategy (64.93%), cognitive (61.53%), social (59.8%), and metacognitive (56.4%).

Asworo (2019) conducted a study to understand the students' speaking challenges and the steps that the teacher took to offer assistance in overcoming these challenges. Speaking issues that the participants faced were both linguistic and non-linguistic in nature. Lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and ignorance of grammar rules were examples of linguistic issues. Non-linguistic issues included inhibition, silence, uneven participation, mother tongue interference, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and low motivation. In to alleviate such problems, the teacher resorted to such techniques as role playing, drilling, brainstorming, and motivating the students to confront the challenges.

Abrar at al. (2018) examined the viewpoints and experiences of eight Indonesian EFL student teachers with respect to speaking skills. Using semi-structured interviews, they were able to identify a number of specific themes that were as follows: (1) language barriers (i.e., vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency); (2) psychological factors (i.e., anxiety, attitude, motivation); (3) learning environment (i.e., lecturers, peers, and topics), and (4) practicing the language (self-practice, practicing with others, using media and technology, and maintaining a positive motivation).

Rahmaniah at al. (2018) carried out an empirical investigation to learn more about the speaking challenges that English learners faced. According to results, the main problem that second-year students in the Indonesian department had was related to grammar; 80% had nearly wholly incorrect answers, with the exception of common phrases. Secondly, 73% of the participants has very sluggish and inconsistent speech, with the exception of brief or simple utterances. Thirdly, 73% of the participants committed serious pronunciation errors, and a very strong accent made understanding challenging and necessitated many repetition. Fourthly, 60% of the students used vocabulary that was restricted to survival and fundamental personal skills. Last but not least, when it comes to comprehension, only sluggish, extremely plain discourse on popular social and tourism issues was understood by 55% of the participants; this, however, took extensive repetition and rephrasing. It was clear that the participants needed to overcome both internal and external barriers when it comes to speaking English.

Finally, Muamaroh (2009) conducted a study at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta in Indonesia. The findings indicated that vocabulary, grammar proficiency, and pronunciation issues were cognitive elements that caused problems with speaking. Anxiety, fear, humiliation, and lack of confidence were affective elements. The students' lethargy, infrequent practice of speaking English, and the unfavorable setting all contributed to their view of speaking English as difficult.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

Teachers can support students' English speaking by increasing their motivation and promoting their opinions, providing additional opportunities to speak English in class by implementing some speaking activities that demand students to talk, and selecting an approach that best fits the course requirements and the available material so that boredom can be avoided. They also have to encourage students to participate in debates or discussions on various topics. This fosters critical thinking, improves fluency, and enhances the ability to express opinions effectively. During speaking practice, teachers should avoid continuously pointing out students' mistakes and instead establish a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere. Teachers can also incorporate role-playing activities into the classroom, where students take on different roles and engage in conversations based on specific situations. This allows students to practice real-life communication skills and develop confidence in using English.

The responsibility of the university is to design appropriate English curriculum based on speaking English, not learning grammar. It has been observed that English textbooks do not often give students opportunities to communicate in English and do not have enough activities that are specifically created for speaking. Thus teachers should design projects or tasks that require students to collaborate, research, and present their findings in English. This encourages active engagement and promotes speaking skills in a practical context. They should also establish a dedicated space where students can practice speaking English with the help of technological resources, language learning software, or one-on-one conversation partners. This provides a supportive environment for focused speaking practice. Teachers should also organize extracurricular conversation clubs or language support sessions where students can meet regularly to practice speaking English in a relaxed and informal setting. This fosters peer-to-peer interaction and builds speaking confidence. By incorporating these recommendations, universities can create an engaging and effective learning environment that facilitates English language development and fosters students' confidence in speaking English.

Most, if not all, students face difficulties when learning to speak English, making it extremely challenging for them to communicate effectively. These difficulties can be influenced by various factors, including the teacher, class environment, instructional setting, and individual factors. Insufficient practice is a significant issue as students often lack time to dedicate to practicing their English. It is important to emphasize that listening practice is equally crucial as it is closely linked to speaking. After all, speaking involves listening comprehension as well. When teachers use their native language instead of the target language, students do not have a chance to regularly engage with English. Additionally, many students

lack confidence in speaking English. To improve their English speaking fluency, students should put effort into their studies, practice speaking more frequently, express their ideas without hesitation, and overcome the fear of making mistakes.

There are several ways to enhance English speaking skills. One approach is watching English-language movies, where the focus should be on the conversations rather than relying heavily on subtitles. That is why, students need to pay attention to how actors and actresses pronounce words and use specific phrases in different settings. Such visual input will help comprehension. Another method is listening to English songs, which helps students become accustomed to English pronunciation and improves their ability to pronounce words (Johnson & Davies, 2020; Smith, 2018). Additionally, decoding song lyrics while listening can be a fun way to expand vocabulary. Lastly, utilizing social media in daily life can be beneficial. Students could be asked to create English accounts on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram or connect with online friends who frequently communicate in English, as this will provide opportunities to acquire new language skills and interact with people from different countries.

Students can join conversation groups or language exchange programs where they can interact with native English speakers or other learners. This provides a supportive environment for practicing speaking skills and gaining confidence. Utilizing multimedia resources such as podcasts, TED Talks or online videos that focus on spoken English is also extremely beneficial. This exposes students to different accents, vocabulary, and expressions, enhancing their listening and speaking skills. By following these recommendations and emphasizing the importance of speaking practice, teachers and universities can empower students to become proficient English speakers, enabling them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

## 7. Future wok

There are several areas that need to be focused upon to help the development of speaking skills. They are characterized below:

1. Professional development for teachers: Teachers can engage in workshops, seminars, or training sessions to further enhance their skills in supporting students' English speaking. These professional development opportunities can focus on effective speaking activity design, providing constructive feedback, creating an inclusive classroom environment, and incorporating technology into speaking practice.
2. Collaborative research and curriculum development: Universities can encourage collaborative research projects among faculty members to

- explore innovative approaches to English speaking instruction. This can involve investigating the effectiveness of different speaking activities, evaluating the impact of technology on speaking skills development, or designing new assessment methods specifically tailored for speaking proficiency.
3. Action research in classrooms: Teachers can engage in action research within their own classrooms, implementing the recommendations mentioned and evaluating their impact on students' speaking skills. This can involve collecting data on students' progress, analyzing the effectiveness of different strategies, and sharing findings with other teachers and researchers.
  4. Integration of speaking skills across disciplines: Universities can promote interdisciplinary collaborations that require students to apply their English speaking skills in various academic contexts. This can involve designing projects or assignments that involve presentations, debates, or collaborative discussions in subjects like science, humanities, or social sciences.
  5. Creating language support programs: Universities can establish language support programs that provide additional resources and assistance to students aiming to improve their English speaking skills. These programs can offer tutoring services, conversation clubs, language exchange partnerships, or online platforms where students can access speaking practice materials and receive guidance from language experts.
  6. Conducting surveys and needs assessment: Institutions can gather feedback from students to better understand their specific needs and preferences regarding English speaking instruction. Surveys, focus groups, or needs assessments can provide valuable insights into students' experiences, preferences for speaking activities, and areas they feel require more support.
  7. Engaging in international collaborations: Universities can explore partnerships with institutions in English-speaking countries to facilitate language immersion experiences for students. This can involve exchange programs, joint projects, or virtual collaborations that provide students with authentic speaking opportunities and exposure to different cultural contexts.
  8. Monitoring and evaluating student progress: Ongoing assessment of students' speaking skills is crucial to track their progress and identify areas for improvement. Implementing regular speaking assessments, creating speaking portfolios, or using standardized tests can help measure students' proficiency levels and inform instructional decisions.
  9. Research on the impact of technology: Conducting research on the effectiveness of different technological resources and language learning software in developing English speaking skills can provide valuable insights. This research can explore the benefits and limitations of specific tools,

identify best practices for integrating technology into speaking instruction, and evaluate the impact on student motivation and engagement.

10. Collaboration with language learning centers: Universities can collaborate with language learning centers or language departments within the institution to provide additional support and resources for students seeking to improve their English speaking skills. These centers can offer specialized workshops, conversation practice sessions, or language proficiency exams.

By engaging in these initiatives, educators and institutions can continue to enhance their support for students' English speaking skills, promote effective teaching practices, and foster an environment that encourages language development and proficiency.



## References

- Abrar, M., Mukminin, A., Habibi, A., Asyraf, F., Makmur, M., & Marzulina, L. (2018). "If our English isn't a language, what is it?" Indonesian EFL student teachers' challenges speaking English. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), 129-145. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3013>
- Aldarasi, R. A. (2020). Foreign language anxiety: Libyan students speaking in English (Doctoral dissertation), University of Glasgow. <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/80275/1/2019AldarasiPhD.pdf>
- Al-Hassaani, A. M. A., & Al-Saalmi, A. F. M. Q. (2022). Saudi EFL learners' speaking skills: status, challenges, and solutions. *Arab World English Journal*, 13(2), 328-337. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.22>
- Amiruddin, A. (2022). English speaking's barriers of foreign learners. *JRTI (Jurnal Riset Tindakan Indonesia)*, 7(3), 495-498. <https://doi.org/10.29210/30032073000>
- Aprianto, D., & Haerazi, H. (2019). Development and assessment of an intercultural-based instrument model in the teaching of speaking skills. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(12), 2796-2805. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.071230>
- Ariani, D. (2020). Problems of Electrical Engineering Department students of Polytechnic of Raflesia in speaking English in group presentation. *Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET)*, 4, 195-205.
- Ariyanti. (2016). Psychological factors affecting EFL students speaking performance. *Asian TEFL*.
- Asworo, C.W. (2019). The Analysis of students' difficulties in speaking English at the Tenth Grade of SMK N 2 Purworejo. *Journal of Electrical Engineering & Technology*, 3, 533-538
- Azlan, N. A. B., Zakaria, S. B., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Integrative task-based learning: developing speaking skill and increase motivation via Instagram. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 9(1), 620-636
- Bailey, K. M. (2005). *Practical English language teaching: Speaking*. McGraw-Hill.
- Benson, P., & Gao, X. (2008). Individual variation and language learning strategies. In S. Hurd & T. Lewis (Eds.), *Language learning strategies in independent settings* (pp. 25-40). <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690999-004>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press
- Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In California State Department of Education (Ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3-49). Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State University

- Desnaranti, L., & Putra, F. (2022). Undergraduate students' perceptions analysis about difficulties in English speaking. *Research and Development Journal of Education*, 8(2), 469-479. <https://doi.org/10.30998/rdje.v8i2.12862>
- Djiwandono, M. S. (2008). Tes Bahasa: *Pegangan bagi Pengajar Bahasa*.
- Doğan, A. (2021). Speaking ability problems of university students according to college English language instructors' perceptions in online education environment (during pandemic): A case study. *Iefl Journal*. <https://openaccess.maltepe.edu.tr/xmlui/handle/20.500.12415/8070>
- Emirza, F., & Sahril, M. (2021). An investigation of English speaking skills performance of introvert students in speaking class. *English Journal*, 15(1), 10-17.
- Febriyanti, E. R. (2011). Teaching speaking of English as a foreign language: Problems and solutions. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya*, 1(2), 133-146.
- Ghalebi, R., Sadighi, F., Bagheri, M. S., & Gilakjani, A. P. (2021). A study of vocabulary learning strategies among high and low Iranian English vocabulary learners. *Cogent Education*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2020.1834933>
- Goh, C., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. Cambridge University Press
- Haerazi, H., & Irawan, L. A. (2020). The effectiveness of ECOLA technique to improve reading comprehension in relation to motivation and self-efficacy. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (Ijet)*, 15(01), 61-76. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i01.11495>
- Hamad, K. Q., & Seyyedi, K. (2020). Communication challenges facing Soran university students in speaking English as a foreign language. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 3(8). 40-53.
- Handini, B. S., Prasetyaningrum, A., Jaelani, S. R., & Azima, M. F. F. (2021). An analysis on students' difficulties in speaking. *Humanitatis: Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(2), 187-192. <https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v7i2.1248>
- Harya, T. D. (2022). An Analysis of advance level students to perform their speaking English. *Bulletin Of Pedagogical Research*, 2(1), 53-63. <https://doi.org/10.51278/bpr.v2i1.251>
- Hughes, R. (2002). *Teaching and researching speaking*. Pearson Education
- Huyen, P. N., & Cang, N. T. (2021). Developing EFL learners' autonomy in speaking English: an investigation into students' practice at a university in the Mekong delta, Vietnam. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 943-955. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v6i6.4039>
- Irmawati, D. K. (2016). Faktor-faktor penghambat peningkatan kemampuan berbicara bahasa inggris mahasiswa jurusan bahasa inggris di kota malang. *Vikasindo*, 9(26). <https://vokasindo.ub.ac.id/index.php/vokasindo/article/download/44/pdf>
- Johnson, M., & Davis, R. (2020). The impact of listening to English songs on pronunciation improvement. *Language Education Research*, 28(2), 45-58

- Juhana. (2012). Linguistic factors that become students' obstacles to speak in English class. *Ragam Jurnal Pengembangan Humaniora*, 12(2), 63-77. <https://www.scribd.com/document/217633109/RagamAgt-1-2012-A-juhana>
- Juhana. (2012). Psychological factors that hinder students from speaking in English class. *Journal Education and Practice*, 3(12), 100-110 [https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/viewFile/2887/2\\_913](https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/viewFile/2887/2_913)
- Kashmiri, H. A. (2019). Communication challenges: Saudi EFL speaking skills and strategies to overcome speaking difficulties (MA thesis). *Arab World English Journal*, 1-61.
- Kusumawardani, S. A., & Mardiyani, E. (2018). The correlation between English grammar competence and speaking fluency. *Project (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 1(6), 724-733. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v1i6.p724-733>
- Lail, H. (2019). The effectiveness of using English movie with English subtitles in teaching vocabulary at the eighth year students of SMPN Selong in the academic year of 2018/2019. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 6(2), 100-107. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v6i2.1261>
- Leong, L., & Masoumeh, A. S. (2017). An analysis of factors influencing learners' English speaking skill. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2(1), 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.18869/acadpub.ijree.2.1.34>
- Lingga, L. M., Simanjuntak, R. M., & Sembiring, Y. B. (2020). students' strategies in learning speaking skills at SMP Nasrani 3 Medan. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 8(1), 91-99. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v8i1.2238>
- Manurung, Y. H. (2020). Analysis on students' English speaking performance at University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. *Vision: Journal Bahasa Dan Pendidikan*, 16(2), 36-44. <https://doi.org/10.30829/vis.v16i2.809>
- Muamaroh, M. (2009). Oral English proficiency: obstacles and solution for university students on Muhammadiyah university of Surakarta. *Kajian Linguistik Dan Sastra*, 21(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.23917/cls.v21i1.4386>
- Nazara, S. (2011). Students' perception on EFL speaking skill development. *Journal of English Teaching*, 1(1), 28-43.
- Octaberlina, L. R., Muslimin, A. I., & Rofiki, I. (2022). An investigation on the speaking constraints and strategies used by college students studying English as EFL learners. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(9), 232-249. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.9.14>
- Oktavia, D., & Lestari, R. (2022). Students' perception on learning speaking English by using English domino games: the case of a private university. *IRJE (Indonesian Research Journal in Education)*, 6(1), 28-42. <https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v6i1.15327>
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Newbury House

- Pertiwi, W. E., & Suwartono, T. (2019). Tertiary EFL learners' strategies in handling target oral communication challenges. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334529178\\_Tertiary\\_EFL\\_Learners'\\_Strategies\\_In\\_Handling\\_Target\\_Oral\\_Communication\\_Challenges](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334529178_Tertiary_EFL_Learners'_Strategies_In_Handling_Target_Oral_Communication_Challenges)
- Prabawa, W. P. (2016). Speaking strategies used by Indonesian tertiary students. *ENGLISH REVIEW: Journal of English Education*, 4(2), 2016, 231-242.
- Pujiani, T., Nisa, K., & Krisbiantoro, B. (2021). Improving the students' self-confidence in speaking English through YouTube. *International Journal of Health Science and Technology*, 2(3), 166-176. <https://doi.org/10.31101/ijhst.v2i3.2173>
- Rahmaniah, R., & Asbah, A. (2018). The speaking difficulties encountered by non-English students in language classroom. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics (JELTL)*, 11(2).
- Ratnasari, A. G. (2020). EFL Students' challenges in learning speaking skills: A case study in Mechanical Engineering Department. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching & Learning*, 5(1), 20-38. <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.5145>
- Rintaningrum, R. (2018). Investigating reasons why listening in English is difficult: Voice from foreign language learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 20(11), 112-120.
- Ruslin, Nursita, Siyam, H. (2022). Empirical and practical analysis on the experience of English department students in learning speaking skills. *Prosiding "Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Berbasis Multidisciplinary di Era Society 5.0" Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362504141\\_EMPIRICAL\\_AND\\_PRACTICAL\\_ANALYSIS\\_ON\\_THE\\_EXPERIENCE\\_OF\\_ENGLISH\\_DEPARTMENT\\_STUDENTS\\_IN\\_LEARNING\\_SPEAKING\\_SKILLS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362504141_EMPIRICAL_AND_PRACTICAL_ANALYSIS_ON_THE_EXPERIENCE_OF_ENGLISH_DEPARTMENT_STUDENTS_IN_LEARNING_SPEAKING_SKILLS)
- Saputra, E. W., & Subekti, N. B. (2017). A study of the speaking learning strategies used by English Education Department students. *JELLT (Journal of English Language and Language Teaching)*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.36597/jellt.v1i1.915>
- Saragih, S. M., & Listyani, L. (2021). English language education program second-year students' speaking difficulties in an academic speaking class. *SAGA*, 2(2), 73-88. <https://doi.org/10.21460/saga.2021.22.77>
- Smith, A. (2018). Enhancing pronunciation skills through English songs. *Journal of Language Learning*, 42(3), 123-136
- Snow, C. E., & Uccelli, P. (2009). The challenge of academic language. In D. R. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of literacy* (pp. 112-133). Cambridge University Press.
- Thao, T. T., & Trung, V. T. (2022). Difficulties encountered by students at a university in Vietnam in speaking English. *International Journal of Social Science And Human Research*, 5, 1013-1019.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Longman.

- Utami, S. D., & Kusumastuti, D. I. (2022). Students' perception on the lecturer's feedback of their speaking ability in online class. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 6(2), 64-68. <https://doi.org/10.25157/jall.v6i2.8518>
- Urwat, M. S., Nadeem, M., Zafar, M., & Khan, R. U. (2022). Why do university students in Pakistan confront problems in spoken English? *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, 35(8), 40-49. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jesbs/2022/v35i830447>
- Yazıcı, E., & Bavlı, B. (2022). What can i do to overcome my EFL students' speaking challenges? *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 5(1), 311-319.