

Exploring challenges and strategies in English speaking among Indonesian university students: A case study of AKM university

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ABSTRACT

English language education in Indonesia spans from primary school to university levels. However, achieving mastery in English, particularly in speaking, remains a significant challenge for Indonesian university students. This study aimed to investigate the problems faced by these students in speaking English and describe their efforts to overcome this deficiency. The research utilized a descriptive qualitative method, employing questionnaires and interviews as instruments. The study participants consisted of 45 second-semester students from the English Education Department at AKM University (pseudonym). The findings revealed that students encountered both linguistic and psychological challenges when speaking English. Linguistic problems included confusion in tense usage, a lack of grammar understanding, and difficulty in selecting appropriate vocabulary. Psychological issues encompassed feelings of nervousness, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and the fear of being laughed at. Furthermore, insufficient practice emerged as an environmental factor contributing to speaking difficulties. To address these challenges, students adopted various learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990), including memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

Keywords: *English language learning; Speaking difficulties; Linguistic problems; Psychological problems; Learning strategies; University students*

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1. Introduction

In today's era, learning English has become a necessity due to its status as an international language widely used by numerous countries, trailing only Mandarin and Spanish. Additionally, English has gained prominence as a global language due to its extensive utilization in international organizations (Syafiyah et al., 2021). In Indonesia, English education begins at the primary school level and continues throughout university, as mandated by the government, with the aim of equipping the younger generation with the necessary skills to compete on the international stage (Alwasilah, 2001). However, despite the comprehensive English education provided, mastering the language, particularly speaking, remains a challenge for Indonesian university students. Proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension is required for effective English speaking, and deficiencies in these areas can hinder students' ability to express their thoughts effectively or understand others' ideas (Sayuri, 2016).

Furthermore, several studies have highlighted the anxieties and fears experienced by students when speaking English. Many students feel apprehensive about making mistakes or being criticized, resulting in self-consciousness and inhibition in the classroom setting (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The fear of being laughed at due to mispronunciation or grammatical errors adds to these concerns (Littlewood, 2007). Additionally, students may struggle to comprehend the teacher's instructions or questions, which further impedes their ability to participate actively in English-speaking activities (Baker & Westrup, 2003). Providing students with a preview of the topics to be covered in class could assist them in familiarizing themselves with relevant vocabulary and improving their overall performance.

Limited knowledge of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension has been identified as one of the primary reasons behind students' difficulties in speaking English (Hadijah, 2014). Linguistic problems, such as poor grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills, contribute to these challenges (Doris & Jessica, 2007). Additionally, psychological factors, such as a lack of self-confidence and anxiety, negatively impact students' speaking abilities (Fitriani et al., 2015).

Given the aforementioned background, the researchers acknowledge that many university students still struggle with speaking English. A study conducted among students in the English Department at Syiah Kuala University revealed that the main problems they encountered were a lack of vocabulary and a fear of making mistakes, which led them to refrain from speaking (Heriansyah, 2012). Fear of criticism was identified as the primary reason for hesitation in speaking English as a foreign language among university students (Ibnian, 2019). In a similar vein, a questionnaire-based study involving sophomore and junior EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in Taiwan indicated that psychological issues were the primary cause of speaking difficulties. These issues were followed by linguistic and environmental problems, such as the absence of appropriate contexts for English conversations (Shen & Chiu, 2019).

In line with the above discussion, numerous challenges arise when it comes to speaking English in student universities. In order to address these issues, the researchers embarked on a study to explore the obstacles faced by students enrolled in the English education department at AKM University during the second semester of the 2020 academic year. The primary objective was to investigate the students' perspectives on overcoming English speaking difficulties and to identify the strategies they employed. This study sought to answer two key research questions: firstly, what specific problems did English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners encounter while speaking English, and secondly, what effective speaking strategies were utilized by those who achieved success in their language proficiency.

2. Literature review

2.1. The significance of speaking skills and its challenges

Speaking constitutes a foundational pillar of human interaction, serving as the cornerstone of effective communication (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Within the quartet of language skills – namely, reading, listening, speaking, and writing – speaking emerges as particularly pivotal, underpinning successful interpersonal communication (Ur, 2000). For students aiming to master the English language, the ability to speak proficiently carries immense importance, as it empowers them to engage with fellow learners and native speakers alike (Efrizal, 2012).

Despite its paramount significance, speaking in English poses a series of challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. These challenges encompass linguistic and psychological factors, erecting formidable barriers to achieving proficiency in speaking. Linguistic hurdles encompass vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Spolsky & Hult, 2008). A robust grasp of vocabulary is imperative for language acquisition, and its inadequacy hinders effective communication (Khan et al., 2018). Proficiency in grammar enables the construction of meaningful sentences, thereby augmenting the quality of communication (Kusumawardani & Mardiyani, 2018). The accurate pronunciation of words, encompassing elements like intonation, stress, rhythm, and accent, assumes a critical role in ensuring clear and coherent communication (Saputra, 2020).

Beyond these linguistic challenges, psychological barriers loom large, impeding English speaking proficiency. The apprehension of making mistakes often discourages classroom participation (Al-Nakhalah, 2016), necessitating the creation of supportive learning environments that normalize errors during the learning process. Feelings of shame, restlessness, and anxiety can serve as significant impediments to fluent speaking (Baldwin, 2011). Anxiety, in particular, exerts an adverse impact on fluency and pronunciation, necessitating the development of strategies to mitigate its effects. Confidence, too, assumes a pivotal role in this context, as feelings of inferiority can hamper active engagement in conversations (Shen & Chiu, 2019).

Furthermore, it has been observed that the learning environment has a significant role in the manifestation of speaking issues. These challenges might arise due to factors such as a lack of opportunities for English conversation, insufficient support from teachers, inadequate practise materials and resources, and a general lack of active engagement in classroom discussions (Shen & Chiu, 2019). Enhancing students' English-speaking ability can be achieved by addressing these issues through the implementation of tailored education and the establishment of a supportive atmosphere.

2.2. English speaking strategy

In the process of learning a foreign language, students often employ various strategies to master the language. When it comes to English speaking, there are several strategies that can be implemented. Language learning strategies can be categorized into two main categories, each consisting of sub-categories (Oxford, 1990).

The direct strategy is the first category, which includes memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies aim to help students store new information in memory and retrieve it when needed. Techniques such as phonetic spelling and structured reviews can assist students in remembering new vocabulary and grasping English grammar concepts (Oktaviabri & Degaf, 2023). Cognitive strategies involve manipulating or transforming language in various ways. Students can improve their speaking skills by practicing continuously and repeating words or sentences in English, applying them in everyday life when interacting with native speakers. With practice and experience, students can employ cognitive strategies to solve language problems effectively. Compensation strategies are utilized by students to overcome knowledge gaps. When students have limited knowledge of certain words or phrases, they can compensate by using gestures or body language to convey the intended meaning. For instance, if a student is unfamiliar with the English phrase "open the door," they can use gestures to demonstrate the action and help others understand their request.

On the other hand, the indirect strategy encompasses metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve controlling the learning process, including planning and evaluating progress towards communicative competence (Zahro et al., 2021). Students can set goals and create a plan for English speaking practice. They can also evaluate their speaking ability and track their improvement over time. Affective strategies focus on managing and improving students' emotions. Controlling emotions is crucial for effective learning, especially in language learning where anxiety can be prevalent. Affective strategies can include techniques such as taking deep breaths before speaking to calm nerves. Additionally, embracing mistakes as part of the learning process and maintaining a positive mindset can contribute to a more enjoyable learning experience. Social strategies involve engaging with others in the language learning process. Interacting with people, particularly native speakers, can greatly enhance students' speaking abilities in the target language (Najihah et al., 2023). Students are encouraged to observe native speakers' speech patterns, grammar usage, and

question-asking techniques. Seeking and evaluating feedback provided by native speakers can further improve their speaking skills. Through the implementation of these tactics, students who find problems in speaking English can effectively manage the challenges they face. The implementation of efficient language learning tactics can greatly assist students in their language acquisition process, facilitating the development of their English-speaking abilities with assurance and expertise.

3. Method

3.1. Research design

The research aimed to investigate students' English communication challenges and the strategies they employ to overcome them. Qualitative research was selected as the most suitable approach for this study, given its focus on variables rather than quantification. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed to gain insights into students' obstacles and their efforts to enhance their spoken English proficiency. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the current situation. The study participants were second-semester students from the English Education Department at AKM University in 2020, who were enrolled in a formal interaction speaking class. The selection of participants was based on initial interviews conducted by the researchers to identify relevant research issues.

3.2. Data sources

Data sources were categorized into primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with second-semester students from the English Education Department at AKM University during the 2020 academic year. Secondary data included journal articles, books, e-books, websites, and other relevant resources related to the study.

3.3. Data collection

The data collection for this study was designed as a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, involving questionnaires and interviews to gain a multifaceted understanding of the challenges faced by students when communicating in English.

In addition to questionnaires, interviews formed a vital component of the data collection process. A subset of five students was purposefully selected based on their questionnaire responses. Structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted remotely via WhatsApp. These interviews aimed to provide deeper insights into the strategies employed by students to overcome speaking difficulties, offering qualitative perspectives and a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and approaches.

3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis included several steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the collected data to streamline and refine it. Data display involved converting raw data into narrative text and constructing tables to illustrate findings. Drawing conclusions synthesized the findings and used triangulation to ensure credibility and validity by cross-referencing data from multiple sources or methods.

4. Findings and discussion

The researchers discuss the findings of this study in relation to the research questions. Each finding is based on the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews. The following sections provide a detailed account of the research findings.

4.1. Challenges in speaking English as a foreign language

EFL students face a myriad of challenges when it comes to speaking English. Qualitative research findings reveal that the primary issue, as identified by most students, is anxiety. Prior studies have also demonstrated the adverse impact of anxiety on students' oral performance (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017 as cited in Woodrow, 2006). This anxiety often takes the form of a lack of confidence in speaking English, stemming from students' awareness of their limited English skills during conversations with friends. Students fear not comprehending what is being said and feel embarrassed due to their perceived inability to speak English. Al-Nakhalah (2016) supports this finding, stating that students often prefer to remain silent while others speak, indicating a lack of confidence in communication.

In addition to anxiety and lack of confidence, students also grapple with insufficient sentence organization. This issue may result from an incomplete grasp of tenses, making it challenging for students to express themselves effectively in English. Furthermore, inadequate knowledge of grammar presents a significant challenge for English learners. The complexity and abundance of grammar rules can be overwhelming, leading students to find them confusing when speaking (Sayuri, 2016).

Moreover, students often experience a fear of making mistakes while speaking English. Making mistakes can lead to embarrassment and a loss of confidence, as students worry about being perceived as unintelligent by their peers (Kurtus, 2001 as cited in Al-Nakhalah, 2016). Another challenge is the lack of vocabulary. Students struggle with vocabulary because they are uncertain about word placement, such as identifying whether a word is a verb, noun, or adjective. This confusion can occur even if students possess a vast vocabulary but lack understanding of word meanings. Therefore, it is crucial for students to not only acquire new vocabulary but also comprehend its meaning. Learners should strive to understand the general, deeper, and more sophisticated meanings of words, as well as their forms and correct usage in various contexts and situations (Dewi & Jimmi, 2018).

Furthermore, pressure plays a significant role in students' difficulties in speaking English. The fear of making mistakes is often heightened by the pressure to perform well. Students worry that their friends will laugh at them or offer negative evaluations if they make errors while speaking English, as highlighted by Hieu (2011, as cited in Al-Nakhalah, 2016). Finally, inadequate practice is another problem identified by students in this study. A lack of opportunities to practice speaking English may result from limited resources, scheduling difficulties, or discomfort in an environment where English is not commonly spoken. Shen & Chiu (2019) support this finding, suggesting that the less practice students have in speaking English, the more anxious they become.

In conclusion, EFL students face multiple challenges when it comes to speaking English. These challenges can be categorized into three main areas: linguistic challenges, psychological challenges, and environmental challenges. The questionnaire results provide valuable insights into the specific problems students encounter in each of these areas.

4.1.1. Linguistic problem

In this section, we present the findings from the questionnaire, which offer a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic problems faced by second-semester students at AKM University. These insights are crucial in identifying the specific challenges students encounter when speaking English and lay the foundation for developing effective strategies to address these issues.

Table 1

Linguistic problem.

Linguistic problems	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Insufficient vocabulary	0 0%	8 17,8%	21 46,7%	16 35,6%	0 0%	45 100%
Lack of vocabulary	1 2,2%	8 17,8%	17 37,8%	19 42,2%	0 0%	45 100%
Insufficient sentences organization	2 4,4%	4 8,9%	15 33,3%	18 40%	6 13,3%	45 100%
Insufficient grammar	1 2,2%	5 11,1%	18 40%	15 33,3%	6 13,3%	45 100%
Insufficient pronunciation	2 4,4%	5 11,1%	23 51,1%	13 28,9%	2 4,4%	45 100%
Lack of pronunciation	1 2,2%	12 26,7%	20 44,4%	11 24,4%	1 2,2%	45 100%

The questionnaire results in Table 1 provide valuable insights into the English-speaking problems faced by second-semester students. Upon analysing the responses, it becomes apparent that the students themselves have identified several linguistic challenges.

Regarding vocabulary, the majority of participants (46.7%) expressed a neutral stance, indicating that they do not consider insufficient vocabulary to be a major obstacle in their English speaking. However, 42.2% of the students agreed that they struggle with a lack of vocabulary, leading to difficulties in accurately expressing their thoughts and ideas. This suggests that some students feel limited in their ability to find the right words and may resort to simpler language choices.

In terms of sentence organization, a significant proportion of participants (13.3% strongly agreed, 40% agreed) recognized this as a speaking problem. These students face difficulties in structuring their sentences effectively, which can result in a lack of coherence and clarity in their spoken English. Grammar also emerged as a prominent issue, as most students (13.3% strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed) acknowledged having deficiencies in this area. This implies that they are aware of making grammar errors, such as verb tense inconsistencies or problems with sentence construction. These mistakes can impact the accuracy and overall fluency of their spoken English. On the other hand, pronunciation did not appear to be a major concern for the majority of EFL students, with a significant number (51.1%) selecting the neutral option. Similarly, the lack of pronunciation was also considered a relatively minor issue (44.4% neutral). This suggests that students generally feel comfortable with their pronunciation skills and do not perceive it as a significant hindrance in their English speaking.

Based on the questionnaire responses, it can be concluded that a lack of vocabulary, insufficient sentence organization, and inadequate grammar knowledge are the primary speaking problems identified by the students. These challenges were recognized based on the students' own assessment of their language skills and the difficulties they encounter when communicating in English. The insights gained from the linguistic issues identified by the students in the questionnaire can be instrumental in developing targeted strategies and interventions to address their specific needs. By understanding the challenges, they face in vocabulary, sentence organization, and grammar, researchers can design approaches that cater to these areas of improvement. This targeted approach will contribute to creating a more effective learning environment that is tailored to enhance the students' English-speaking abilities and overall communication skills.

However, it is important to note that the questionnaire results did not directly address the psychological problems faced by the respondents. The researchers mentioned that the participants expressed their opinions differently regarding these psychological issues, but further details and findings were not provided in the given context. Thus, it is necessary to refer to Table 2 or obtain additional information to understand and explore the psychological problems faced by the students in greater depth.

4.1.2. Psychological problem

Table 2 below provides an overview of the psychological difficulties encountered by students when engaging in oral communication in English. The issues mentioned can significantly impact individuals' language acquisition efforts and their proficiency in effective communication. One prominent psychological concern that emerges is the fear of making mistakes.

Table 2

Psychological problem.

Psychological problems	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Fear of making mistakes	5 11,1%	6 13,3%	14 31,1%	13 28,9%	7 15,6%	45 100%
Pressure	8 17,8%	8 17,8%	10 22,2%	16 35,6%	3 6,7%	45 100%
Anxiousness	3 6,7%	3 6,7%	10 22,2%	17 37,8%	12 26,7%	45 100%
Lack of confidence	3 6,7%	2 4,4%	12 26,7%	17 37,8%	11 24,4%	45 100%

The data presented in Table 2 provides insights into the psychological problems faced by students when speaking English. Among these, the fear of making mistakes stands out as a significant issue. Out of the 45 participants, 15.6% strongly agreed, and 28.9% agreed that they feel fear when speaking English due to the possibility of making mistakes. Additionally, pressure emerged as another prominent psychological problem. Among the participants, 35.6% agreed, and 6.7% strongly agreed that they experience pressure while speaking English. This indicates that students perceive a certain level of pressure or stress during English communication.

Anxiousness was also identified as a psychological problem. The data revealed that 26.7% of participants strongly agreed, and 37.8% agreed that they experience anxiety when speaking English. This suggests that a significant number of students feel anxious or nervous during English speaking activities. Furthermore, the students acknowledged a lack of confidence as a psychological problem affecting their English-speaking abilities. Of the 45 participants, 24.4% strongly agreed, and 37.8% agreed that they lack confidence when speaking English. This highlights the students' perception that their self-confidence plays a role in their ability to communicate effectively in English.

Based on the results presented in Table 2, it can be inferred that students agree that the linguistic problems identified in the study are indeed the causes of their difficulties in

speaking English. Additionally, the students' responses indicate that they face psychological challenges related to fear, pressure, anxiousness, and lack of confidence when speaking English. These psychological factors may impact their overall speaking performance and need to be considered when designing appropriate interventions and support for the students.

Recognizing the presence of pressure and anxiousness is crucial in addressing students' speaking difficulties. Educators and language learning professionals can employ strategies to alleviate these psychological burdens. Creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment, providing opportunities for gradual exposure and practice, offering constructive feedback and encouragement, and implementing relaxation techniques or mindfulness exercises can help reduce stress and anxiety. By addressing these psychological challenges alongside linguistic issues, students can develop more confidence, overcome their fears, and enhance their English-speaking skills in a more relaxed and supportive learning environment.

4.1.3. Environment problem

Table 3 provides an analysis of the environmental obstacles faced by students in the realm of English language communication. A prominent concern that necessitates consideration is the inadequacy of practice, a matter that is commonly recognized by a considerable proportion of students owing to its enormous impact.

Table 3

Environment problem.

Environment problems	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Insufficient practice	2 4,4%	4 8,9%	15 33,3%	18 40%	6 13,3%	45 100%
Insufficient support	0 0%	8 17,8%	21 46,7%	16 35,6%	0 0%	45 100%
Infrequent English conversation	1 2,2%	12 26,7%	20 44,4%	11 24,4%	1 2,2%	45 100%

Table 3 provides insights into the environmental challenges encountered by students in the context of English language communication. Among these problems, insufficient practice stands out as a major challenge, with a considerable number of students recognizing its impact. Approximately 13.3% of participants strongly agreed, and 40% agreed that they do not have enough practice opportunities to enhance their English-speaking skills. This indicates a shared perception among students regarding the lack of adequate practice as a hindrance to their progress.

In contrast, insufficient support and infrequent English conversation do not appear to be significant obstacles according to the students' responses. The majority of participants (46.7%) chose the neutral option for insufficient support, indicating mixed

opinions about the level of support they receive in improving their English-speaking abilities. It is worth noting that while some students may feel adequately supported, others may believe they require more assistance. Similarly, for infrequent English conversation, a significant proportion of participants (44.4%) also selected the neutral option. This suggests that students do not experience frequent opportunities for English conversation, but they do not consider it a significant challenge either. It is important to recognize that the neutral response does not necessarily indicate satisfaction with the current frequency of English conversations. Instead, it reflects the diverse experiences and opinions students have regarding the availability of such opportunities.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that insufficient practice is a prominent environmental problem perceived by students when it comes to speaking English. However, insufficient support and infrequent English conversation are not identified as significant obstacles according to the students' perspectives. It is important to note that while environmental factors play a role in students' speaking difficulties, the researchers primarily focused on presenting the students' problems in the areas of linguistics, psychology, and the environment. These findings suggest that multiple factors contribute to the challenges students face in speaking English. To address these issues effectively, it is crucial to consider a range of student response strategies. These strategies, which are further elaborated in Table 4, provide insights into the approaches students adopt to cope with their speaking problems. By understanding and incorporating these strategies into educational interventions, educators can provide targeted support to enhance students' English-speaking skills and create a more conducive learning environment.

4.2. Students' strategies for improving speaking skills

Based on the outcomes of qualitative study, it has been observed that students utilise a range of techniques to address their difficulties in English speaking. These strategies are consistent with the strategies inventory for language learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). These strategies include memorization, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Hardan, 2013). Additionally, based on interviews conducted in this study, students reported using strategies from five out of the six SILL categories mentioned above.

4.2.1. Vocabulary enrichment strategies

One of the students' strategies for addressing their vocabulary limitations involves a proactive approach to vocabulary enrichment. The methodology employed by the student, referred to as C1, revolves around the utilization of electronic books (E-books) as a means to enhance her vocabulary skills.

For my lack of vocabulary, I usually download the E-book, and then I read it. Suppose there is something I do not understand about the vocabulary. I write, and I find out what it means (C1).

The interview data sample (C1) demonstrates the student's proactive strategy in addressing speaking challenges connected to vocabulary. The individual elucidates her approach in which she engages in the deliberate act of downloading electronic books (E-books) and perusing them as a deliberate method to enhance her vocabulary. The aforementioned strategy emphasises her proactive involvement in the process of acquiring language, so showcasing her dedication to tackling the specific obstacle of having a limited vocabulary.

Moreover, when the student encounters unfamiliar words while reading, she takes an additional step by conducting research to understand their meanings. This aspect of her strategy aligns with the memory strategy category as defined by Oxford (2003). Within this category, learners actively engage with vocabulary through research and memorization. The student's willingness to seek out the meanings of unfamiliar words demonstrates a proactive attitude towards vocabulary enrichment.

Significantly, the approach employed by the student is distinguished by its proactive nature. The individual in question does not depend entirely on random encounters with unfamiliar terms, but rather actively pursues opportunities to enhance her collection of vocabulary. The individual in question effectively tackles her vocabulary difficulties in a methodical manner by documenting and conducting research on the definitions of unfamiliar terms. This technique not only facilitates her understanding of words within a given context but also adds to the continuous development of her vocabulary.

4.2.2. Grammar proficiency strategies

In the context of enhancing grammar proficiency, one of the students, C4, employs a language-learning application, namely Duolingo, to address vocabulary limitations. C4 elucidates her methodology, placing particular emphasis on the application's provision of daily exposure to novel terminology as a means of augmenting her lexical repertoire.

For the lack of vocabulary, I have a Duolingo application where there is a new vocabulary every day that I can get. It is one way to increase my vocabulary (C4).

The example drawn from the interview data (C4) highlights a student's approach to addressing grammar proficiency issues through the use of a language-learning application, specifically Duolingo. The individual's reaction highlights the utilisation of the programme as a means of often encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. This particular method not only facilitates the expansion of her vocabulary but also indirectly enhances her grammatical proficiency.

The decision made by the student to utilise a language-learning application is in accordance with cognitive techniques aimed at enhancing vocabulary acquisition, hence potentially influencing overall competency in grammar. According to Oxford (2003),

cognitive strategies refer to a set of procedures that involve purposeful and conscious endeavours aimed at improving language proficiency. The student's use of technology-facilitated learning approaches, such as the utilisation of the Duolingo application, can be categorised as cognitive strategies.

While the primary goal might be vocabulary enhancement, consistent exposure to new words and their usage can naturally lead to a deeper understanding of grammatical structures. The app's content, through its well-structured sentences and linguistic patterns, can potentially enhance grammar competency in users over a period of time.

4.2.3. *Metacognitive and affective strategies*

In our exploration of students' strategies for improving their speaking skills, we now turn our attention to metacognitive and affective strategies, with a focus on a specific interview excerpt – C3's response.

Because I'm afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, specifically, I'm afraid of making mistakes when trying to say new vocabulary or using tenses and grammar that I don't fully understand. I deal with it by restructuring the sentences that I will speak into a more straightforward form with vocabulary, tenses, and grammar, which I am sure is correct (C3).

The example provided from the interview data (C3) highlights a student's response to the fear of making mistakes when speaking English. The student specifically displays concerns regarding the utilisation of new vocabulary and the comprehension of unknown grammatical structures and verb tenses. Given this problem, she utilizes a strategy that integrates metacognitive awareness and emotional considerations.

The individual's metacognitive awareness is apparent in her methodology, as she knowingly acknowledges her apprehension about committing errors and actively implements measures to mitigate it. Within this particular framework, the term "metacognition" pertains to the capacity to observe and regulate one's cognitive processes throughout the act of acquiring language skills (Lavasani & Faryadres, 2011). Through the recognition of her apprehension, she exhibits a metacognitive comprehension of her individual language learning process.

The student's strategy involves sentence restructuring to simplify her expressions, ensuring that she uses vocabulary, tenses, and grammar she is confident about. This approach aligns with Lavasani and Faryadres' (2011) definition of metacognitive strategies, which include monitoring and adjusting one's learning strategies based on self-awareness.

Furthermore, her strategy also addresses affective factors related to language learning, particularly the fear of making mistakes. In language learning, affective strategies involve managing emotions, motivation, and attitudes (Hong Shi, 2017). In this particular instance, the apprehension experienced by the student in relation to committing errors can be regarded as an emotional obstacle. The student's approach of shortening

words is intended to mitigate worry and foster self-assurance, both of which constitute fundamental elements of affective strategies.

4.2.4. Social strategies

C5's interview data reveals her unique strategy for addressing anxiety when speaking English. She specifically focuses on the anxiety experienced when speaking in front of others. In order to address this problem, she employs a method of self-practice by engaging in self-directed speech while facing a mirror.

... and for my problem about anxiety itself. I often do things before speaking in front of people, such as talking to myself in front of a mirror (C5).

The interview data (C5) illustrates a student's strategy to address her problem with anxiety when speaking English. As a means of addressing her anxiety, she employs a social technique wherein she engages in self-dialogue while facing a mirror before engaging in public speaking. This self-practice in front of a mirror can be seen as a social strategy because it incorporates an element of social interaction with oneself. It's a form of preparation and self-assurance, similar to practicing with close friends or engaging in conversations with individuals who use the target language. Chilmy, Kusmaryati, and Utari (2020) underscore the importance of employing social tactics, including engaging in conversation with individuals who are native speakers or possess a high level of proficiency in the target language.

The use of a mirror in this context serves as a tool to mimic a social setting where one might speak to others. It allows the student to visualize herself speaking and gain a sense of how she might appear and sound when communicating with others. The utilisation of this visualisation has the potential to mitigate anxiety levels and enhance self-assurance by replicating a social context wherein the individual is required to employ the English language.

In addition, the student's approach is consistent with the notion that employing social methods, such as engaging in collaborative practise or engaging in self-directed practise, might provide positive outcomes in the enhancement of language proficiency. By practicing in front of a mirror, she not only works on her language proficiency but also addresses the affective aspect of language learning by reducing anxiety, which is a key component of social strategies (Hong Shi, 2017).

In summary, the participants in this research study utilised many strategies derived from Oxford's strategy inventory for language learning, encompassing memory, cognitive, metacognitive, emotional, and social strategies. These strategies have demonstrated efficacy in addressing difficulties encountered in English speaking. According to Hong Shi (2017), the six-factor strategy inventory developed by Oxford has a strong correlation with the use of strategies by learners. Through the implementation of

these tactics, students have the opportunity to augment their proficiency in spoken English and effectively tackle the specific challenges they encounter.

In order to enhance comprehension of the difficulties encountered by students in oral English communication and the tactics employed to surmount these obstacles, a comprehensive examination has been undertaken on the data derived from questionnaires disseminated to students during their second academic term. The findings derived from the administered questionnaire provide insights into a range of linguistic challenges experienced by the students, with each respondent contributing a distinct viewpoint. The findings of this analysis are displayed in Table 4, offering significant insights into the approaches employed by students to tackle their speaking difficulties. This table allows for the evaluation of students' responsiveness to different techniques, offering significant insights into the effectiveness of various approaches in improving their English-speaking abilities. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the tactics employed and the students' perceptions of them, we will now examine Table 4 in detail.

Table 4

Students' strategies in solving speaking problems.

Students' Strategies	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Oral interview	8 17,8%	8 17,8%	10 22,2%	16 35,6%	3 6,7%	45 100%
Role play	2 4,4%	5 11,1%	23 51,1%	13 28,9%	2 4,4%	45 100%
Debate	1 2,2%	5 11,1%	18 40%	15 33,3%	6 13,3%	45 100%
Game	0 0%	16 35,6%	21 46,7%	0 0%	8 17,8%	45 100%
Self-sharing	1 2,2%	8 17,8%	17 37,8%	19 42,2%	0 0%	45 100%
Discussion	3 6,7%	2 4,4%	12 26,7%	17 37,8%	11 24,4%	45 100%

Table 4 offers insights into the strategies that students employ to address their speaking problems. The data reveals that students have varying perceptions of these strategies.

Firstly, the strategy of oral interviews is considered effective by a significant portion of students. About 35.6% of participants agreed, and 6.7% strongly agreed that oral interviews are valuable in overcoming their difficulties in speaking English. This suggests that a considerable number of students recognize the importance of oral interviews in enhancing their speaking skills.

On the other hand, the majority of students expressed a neutral stance regarding the use of role play as a strategy. Among the 45 participants, 51.1% chose the neutral option, indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this approach. This implies that

students have mixed opinions about the effectiveness of role play in addressing their speaking problems, possibly due to varying individual experiences.

In contrast, students displayed a favourable response towards the strategy of debate. Thirteen percent of students strongly agreed, and 33.3% agreed that debates are effective in addressing their speaking problems. This indicates that a significant number of students perceive debates as a valuable strategy for improving their speaking skills. The interactive and critical-thinking nature of debates may contribute to their perceived effectiveness.

The data suggests that games are not widely perceived as a strategy to address speaking problems by the students. A significant number (46.7%) chose the neutral option. This implies that students do not strongly associate games with improving their speaking abilities, viewing them more as supplementary or enjoyable activities rather than direct solutions to speaking difficulties.

On the other hand, self-sharing received a positive response from the students. About 42.2% agreed that self-sharing is a valuable strategy for overcoming their speaking difficulties. Self-sharing activities encourage students to express their thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences, allowing them to connect with the target language and enhance their speaking skills. The positive response suggests that students recognize the benefits of self-sharing in building their speaking confidence, fluency, and self-expression.

Lastly, the strategy of discussion was also well-received by the students. Thirty-seven-point eight percent of students agreed, and 24.4% strongly agreed that discussions are effective in addressing their speaking problems. Discussions provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful conversations, express their ideas, and practice speaking in a communicative and interactive setting. The high agreement rate indicates that students perceive discussions as a valuable strategy for improving their speaking abilities, possibly due to the active engagement, peer interaction, and practical application of language skills it offers.

In brief, the results derived from Table 4 indicate that EFL learners exhibit a neutral stance on the utilization of role play and games as tactics to address difficulties in oral communication. On the other hand, students confirm that oral interviews, debates, self-sharing, and discussions are effective strategies in addressing their speaking difficulties. The findings of this study underscore the significance of taking into account students' preferences and views in the design of speaking activities and the selection of suitable tactics to facilitate their English-speaking development. By integrating these efficacious tactics into pedagogical approaches, educators can stimulate students to actively participate in oral exercises, enhance their self-assurance, and enhance their overall language ability.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, the researchers have concluded that psychological problems were encountered by many students when speaking English in this study. Specifically, these psychological problems

included experiencing nervousness in front of people, lacking confidence when speaking English with more proficient individuals, fearing making mistakes while speaking English, and dreading being laughed at for incorrect English usage. On the other hand, linguistic problems observed in this study included confusion in using English tenses, inadequate understanding of grammar, and difficulty in selecting appropriate vocabulary while speaking English. Moreover, insufficient practice was identified as a common issue among students when it came to speaking English in an immersive environment. Furthermore, the students in this study employed various learning strategies, inspired by Oxford's (1990) approach, to overcome their English-speaking problems. These strategies encompassed memory techniques, cognitive methods, metacognitive approaches, affective strategies, and social tactics. Additionally, the researchers discovered that students resorted to leveraging social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and other applications as learning tools to enhance their English-speaking skills.

As a result of this study, the researchers recommend several suggestions for lecturers. It is advisable for lecturers to create a classroom environment where students feel content and enthusiastic about participating in speaking activities. Additionally, lecturers can help students overcome their shyness by exhibiting friendly behaviours and ensuring that they feel comfortable while speaking. Lecturers should also emphasize to students that making mistakes while speaking English is a natural part of the learning process and provide guidance on when and how to correct errors, thereby alleviating students' fear of making mistakes. Moreover, for students encountering difficulties in speaking English, there exist numerous solutions that can be explored, including utilizing social media or other alternative methods. Furthermore, since this study solely focused on students' speaking problems and their strategies for overcoming them, future researchers can investigate other skills such as listening, writing, or reading, thereby expanding the scope of knowledge in this area. Additionally, further studies can delve into the effectiveness of social media platforms in addressing students' English learning challenges, examining how beneficial they are in facilitating language acquisition.

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