

**AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (ELF) STUDENTS  
SPEAKING PROBLEMS AT TWELVE GRADES OF SMA SWASTA DHARMA KARYA  
BERINGIN IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025**

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**Abstract**

*This research delves into the speaking challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at SMA Swasta Dharma Karya Beringin in the academic year 2024/2025, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and psychological obstacles hindering students' proficiency in spoken English. By integrating psycholinguistic and language learning theories, the study explores how psychological factors and effective language acquisition strategies influence language learning processes. Through interviews and tests with twelfth-grade students, the research focuses on identifying specific challenges in linguistic discourse engagement and investigating factors contributing to these difficulties, such as fear of mistakes, shyness, and language proficiency issues. The study aims to offer recommendations to enhance students' speaking abilities, contributing to a nuanced understanding of language acquisition and psychological aspects in the educational context, with the ultimate goal of improving EFL students' speaking skills at SMA Swasta Dharma Karya Beringin.*

**Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Speaking Challenges, Twelfth-Grade Students**

## Introduction

The current situation underscores the importance for Indonesians to be able to communicate in English, especially considering recent global developments. The primary explanation for this phenomenon lies in the extensive use of English as a foreign language for international communication, as explained by Crystal (2005:6), who states that English is utilized for political, social, educational, and economic communication between countries.

Speaking abilities emerge as a crucial component and a primary measure of students' language comprehension performance in the field of education, as mentioned by Ratnawati (2018:36). When students become fluent speakers, they can interact with native speakers and communicate effectively in the classroom, assisting them in building good connections with others. As part of mastering the English language, speaking skills, in particular, are viewed as the core of language learning as they play a vital role in effective communication, including daily conversations (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017:3)

Daily conversations are deemed essential for students to master, emphasizing the need for students to speak English not only in formal situations but also in informal settings. It is emphasized that due to cultural biases between native English speakers and Indonesian English speakers, it is increasingly important to teach ordinary discussions effectively. To promote connections among speakers, providing explanations is necessary, as cultural differences among speakers can lead to misunderstandings (Susanto, 2007:3).

Experiment findings indicate that students more frequently use the local language than English in their everyday lives, according to research by Wero (2021:19). In other words, their limited exposure to the language hinders their ability to become fluent in it. Being designated as a foreign language implies that English is used exclusively in certain contexts or locations. Chaney (1998:13) suggests that Indonesian learners have limited opportunities to use English, thereby hindering their mastery, particularly in daily conversations.

Daily conversations pose challenges in understanding English. Many students face difficulties in speaking English due to issues such as poor grammar, limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and difficulty expressing thoughts. While prior research has often focused on grammatical issues, there has been less consideration of the significant influence that the social and cultural school environment has on students' everyday speaking skills.

The first researcher in Daulay in (2022:6) embarked on a research endeavor to examine and pinpoint the challenges confronted by students at Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa Private High School when expressing themselves in English. Employing a quantitative approach, this investigation aimed to discern the primary factors contributing to verbal mistakes among the students, with a particular focus on grammatical elements such as syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Hidayati (2021:8) conducted a study addressing students' challenges in verbal communication. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, the research aimed to

recognize difficulties in speaking encountered by second-semester students at Mandako University. The data collection involved 16 students from that specific semester. Both studies significantly contributed to comprehending the hurdles students face in spoken English, concentrating on specific facets like grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Speaking

The most important language skill to learn is speaking. According to Akkakosan (2016:12), English is stated to have a strong position as an international language. Additionally, the skill that will be evaluated the most in real-world scenarios is speaking, as indicated by Brown and Yuke (1983:57). This highlights the high relevance of speaking when interacting with issues that arise in daily life. The importance of speaking abilities for engaging in social interactions, effectively communicating, and transferring information is illustrated by this perspective. Furthermore, as Bailey (2000:25) noted, speaking is an interactive process in which the speaker utilizes information generation, reception, and processing.

In daily life, speaking becomes one of the crucial forms of expression for humans. According to Nurgiyantoro (2013:399), communicating verbally is a linguistic endeavour that individuals undertake as a second language activity in their everyday routines, occurring after the act of listening. Essentially, humans acquire language proficiency by initially being exposed to various sounds, progressing from auditory comprehension to learning the pronunciation of words and achieving the ability to engage in spoken discourse.

### 2.2. Component of Speaking

Speaking is crucial because we need it to comprehend what others convey. Speaking is also a means by which we interact with others. Based on explanations from various experts on speaking skills, researchers can elucidate the components of speaking in each theory as follows: There are four aspects below that significantly influence speaking skills, as expressed by Hormaililis (2003:6):

#### a. vocabulary

Success in speaking heavily relies on the understanding and mastery of vocabulary. Vocabulary is necessary for all aspects of the English language. Because vocabulary improves language acquisition, students will be unable to listen, speak, read, or write the language (Fulcher in Samosir et al., 2023:77). As explained by Hormaililis (2003:6), vocabulary encompasses the selection of precise and appropriate words to convey meaning accurately. Therefore, a rich vocabulary is a primary foundation to ensure effective communication that others can understand.

#### b. grammar

A crucial focus in speaking is brought about by grammar, as articulated (Hormaililis in Ramli, 2003:6). It is believed that smooth communication in speaking can be facilitated when an understanding of grammar is attained. Hence, the key lies in the

awareness of the grammar used in speaking. More specifically, grammar is a set of rules used to arrange words with meaning in a language to convey understandable messages.

#### c. Pronunciation

In speaking, Saleh and Gilakjani emphasized the significance of pronunciation as a fundamental aspect of spoken language and its crucial role in facilitating effective communication (Tampubolon n.d., 2023). The researchers noted that mastery of pronunciation can be achieved through the repetitive practice of sounds and by providing corrective feedback to students when pronunciation errors are made. The active involvement and engagement required from learners to refine their pronunciation skills, ultimately contributing to enhanced clarity and comprehension in oral communication, were underscored. Furthermore, the researchers advocated a dynamic and interactive approach to pronunciation learning, wherein students not only repeat sounds but also receive timely corrections to reinforce accurate pronunciation patterns.

Pronunciation is the process of producing vocal sounds used for communication, and its role is vital in fostering interaction. According to Yuliansih et al. (2014:29-36), the production of sounds is influenced by pronunciation stresses, which shape how the hearer perceives and hears sounds. It is emphasized in the study that pronunciation extends beyond the mere articulation of sounds; intricate patterns of stress are delved into, and they are recognized to play a significant role in shaping the listener's perception of spoken language. In essence, the research suggests that how sounds are stressed contributes significantly to the overall quality and effectiveness of pronunciation, as it is directly impacted by the listener's comprehension and interpretation of the spoken message.

#### d. Fluency

Speaking involves the oral articulation of words, implying a process of exchanging ideas between a speaker and a listener. Therefore, fluency in speaking is deemed crucial, akin to other components of speaking skills. According to Longman (in Hormailis 2003:17), fluency in speaking is defined as the quality or condition of speaking ability. This skill includes using language spontaneously and confidently without pausing or hesitating.

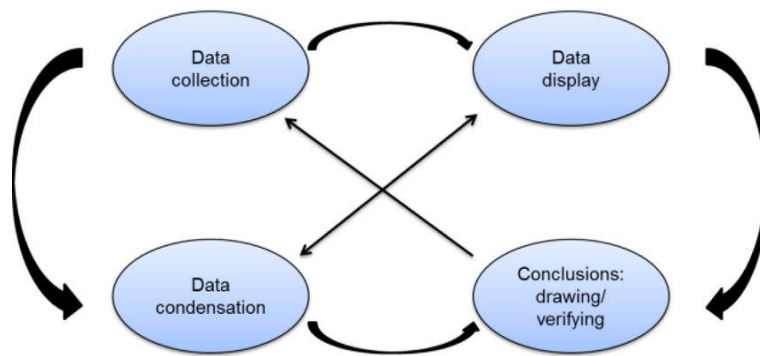
### **Research Method**

A Qualitative descriptive approach was used in this study. According to Sugiyono (1991:1), research methods are systematic techniques for acquiring data with specific objectives and applications. This qualitative investigation specifically examines the teaching-speaking process. In line with Arikunto's perspective (2010:20), descriptive qualitative research involves conceptualizing based on existing information and employs an adaptable research methodology suited to the given circumstances.

Research speaking tests and interviews are part of the data collection process. Speaking tests were structured assessments comprising English language items aimed at evaluating students' proficiency in speaking. These tests, informed by Qodir (2017:36) and Ratna Wulan & Rusdiana (2014:3), were tailored to address various speaking issues encountered by students and were conducted within classroom settings to enhance learning capacities. Interviews, on the other hand, facilitated direct verbal communication between participants, as described by Latief

(2015:201), and were structured to gather in-depth insights into students' difficulties in speaking English and potential remedies.

This research employs Miles and Huberman's framework (in Rijali, 2014:12-13) for qualitative data analysis, consisting of three primary steps. Firstly, data condensation involves summarizing collected data to simplify complexity and identify patterns, achieved through grouping, ordering, and merging relevant data from tests and interviews. Secondly, data display simplifies data into tables or graphs to enhance understanding, presenting patterns or findings systematically for effective communication. Finally, drawing conclusions and verification entails evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing findings to ensure consistency with research questions and methodological justification, culminating in conclusive insights.



Picture: Data Analysis Chart (Huberman & Saldana, 2014)

#### 4. Result and Discussion

##### 4.1 Result of Test

Vocabulary Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I never heard of it miss</li> <li>- I don't know.</li> <li>- I don't know</li> <li>- I don't know miss</li> </ul>
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The study revealed that EFL students at SMA Swasta Dharma Karya Beringin faced challenges in vocabulary usage during speaking activities. Students struggled to provide synonyms for common words and had difficulty understanding the meanings of certain vocabulary items. Respondents also answered "don't know" what vocabulary means. This finding indicates a need for vocabulary enhancement strategies to improve students' lexical proficiency in spoken English and learn more in vocabulary.

Grammar Errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Going</li> <li>Yes, true</li> <li>Watching</li> </ul>
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The research identified various grammar errors among the EFL students, including incorrect verb forms and sentence structures. Students exhibited difficulties in using appropriate tenses and subject-verb agreement, leading to grammatical inaccuracies in their spoken English. Addressing these grammar issues

through targeted instruction and practice can help students improve their grammatical accuracy in speaking.

Pronunciation Challenges	- different -endeavor
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Pronunciation emerged as a significant issue for EFL students, as evidenced by mispronunciations and phonetic errors in spoken English. Students struggled with articulating certain sounds and pronouncing words accurately, affecting their overall speaking fluency and intelligibility. Implementing pronunciation drills and exercises can assist students in developing clearer and more accurate pronunciation skills.

Fluency Concerns	My name is Ayunda Agies Agata, hmm.... ( <i>silent</i> ) I 18 years, hobby read comics.
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The study highlighted fluency problems among EFL students, with some students experiencing difficulties in speaking smoothly and cohesively. Factors such as hesitations, repetitions, and pauses impeded the fluency of students' spoken English, pauses, expressing, impacting the overall communicative effectiveness. Encouraging students to engage in regular speaking practice and providing opportunities for spontaneous speech can enhance their fluency skills over time.

#### 4.2 Result of Interview

The researcher aimed to know the students' problems in English speaking skills based on the students' opinions. There were 8 Questions that the researcher asked the students. All of the questions about the causes of students' problems in mastering speaking skills.

No.	The Causes	Description
1.	Lack of Confident	Respondents felt afraid of making mistakes, felt embarrassed, and lacked confidence when speaking English.
2.	Shyness	Respondents expressed a sense of shyness, especially when faced with difficulties speaking English or committing errors during conversation.
3.	Mistake Fear	Respondents is a fear of making errors, particularly when speaking in public. This apprehension appears rooted in worries about potential ridicule or negative judgment from peers.
3.	Anxiety	Respondents often felt anxious, worried about negative judgments from others, and even experienced anxiety when faced with situations of speaking English.
3.	Lack of Motivation	Respondents were less motivated to practice speaking English because they felt that their skills would never improve.



4.	Lack of Vocabulary	Respondents may struggle to find appropriate words or synonyms in English, indicating a lack of exposure or understanding of a broad vocabulary.
5.	Lack of Speaking Experience	Respondents may have limited experience speaking English in everyday contexts, making them less accustomed to speaking situations in English.
6.	Language Learning Limitations	Respondents may have had ineffective language learning experiences, limiting their ability to master speaking skills.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis conducted on the speaking challenges encountered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at twelve grades of SMA Swasta Dharma Karya Beringin during the academic year 2024/2025 illuminates the intricate landscape of obstacles impeding their proficiency in spoken English. Through meticulous examination, it becomes evident that students grapple with a myriad of linguistic and psychological barriers that significantly hinder their ability to communicate effectively in English.

Firstly, the research underscores the prevalence of vocabulary deficiencies among students, leading to a heavy reliance on their native language and inhibiting their capacity to articulate thoughts and ideas accurately in English. This limitation not only constrains their communicative repertoire but also undermines their confidence in engaging in spoken interactions. Additionally, pronunciation discrepancies emerge as a prominent challenge, stemming from the disparities between written and spoken English, thereby impeding students' intelligibility and hindering effective communication. Moreover, the study elucidates the pervasive issue of fluency hurdles plaguing students, characterized by frequent hesitations and disruptions in speech flow. These impediments not only diminish the coherence and fluidity of their speech but also hinder their ability to express themselves spontaneously and proficiently in English. Furthermore, grammar deficiencies emerge as a significant obstacle, affecting students' mastery of sentence structures and syntactic accuracy, thus impeding their overall communicative competence.

In addition to linguistic challenges, the research delves into the psychological factors exacerbating students' struggles in mastering speaking skills. Factors such as shyness, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and anxiety emerge as formidable barriers, deterring students from actively participating in spoken English activities and inhibiting their willingness to take risks in communication. Particularly, the fear of making mistakes engenders a pervasive sense of self-consciousness among students, eroding their confidence and stifling their progress in spoken English proficiency. Consequently, the findings underscore

the pressing need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing both linguistic deficiencies and psychological barriers to enhance students' speaking proficiency effectively. Implementing strategies such as vocabulary enhancement programs, pronunciation drills, fluency-building activities, grammar instruction, and confidence-building workshops becomes imperative to equip students with the requisite skills and confidence to communicate proficiently in English.

Moreover, fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment wherein students feel encouraged to take risks and learn from their mistakes is essential in nurturing their speaking proficiency and overall language acquisition. By prioritizing a learner-centered approach and tailoring pedagogical strategies to meet the diverse needs of EFL students, educators can create an empowering educational experience that fosters linguistic growth and cultivates confident and competent communicators in English.

In essence, the research underscores the complexity of mastering spoken English skills and highlights the multifaceted challenges that students encounter in their language learning journey. By addressing these challenges holistically and adopting a comprehensive approach to language instruction, educators can empower students to overcome linguistic barriers, cultivate confidence in their speaking abilities, and thrive as effective communicators in English.

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