

 SAJ SAHEL ALMARIFAH JOURNAL	<p>مجلة ساحل المعرفة للعلوم الإنسانية والتطبيقية</p> <p>Sahel Almarifah Journal of Humanities and Applied Sciences</p> <p>تصدر عن الأكاديمية الليبية فرع الساحل الغربي</p> <p>المجلد الأول - العدد الثاني - 2025 - الصفحات (140-156)</p>	 الأكاديمية الليبية The Libyan Academy فرع الساحل الغربي
---	--	--

مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب الجامعة: التصورات والتحديات

رمضان محمد الصادق أحمد¹, حسونة البشير كريم²

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، مدرسة اللغات، الأكاديمية الليبية للدراسات العليا فرع الساحل الغربي

الايميل الاكاديمي: r.ahmad@zu.edu.ly

University EFL Students' Speaking Skill: Perceptions and Challenges

Ramadan Moh. S. Ahmad *¹, Hassuna B. Kraym ²

Department of English, School of Languages, Libyan Academy for Postgraduate Studies,
Western Coast Branch

Abstract

Speaking in L2 is one of the most essential skills that EFL learners need to develop. Enhancing this particular skill poses significant challenges throughout the process of learning. Consequently, this research sought to explore students' perceptions regarding EFL speaking skills. In the current research, exclusively qualitative methods were utilised. Data was gathered through conducting semi-structured interviews with five EFL students selected from Abu-Issa Faculty of Education. Subsequently, the thematic analysis method was utilised to analyse the collected data. The findings obtained revealed that all participants perceive speaking as the most significant skill for EFL learners. They believe that achieving fluency in L2 is a goal they aspire to reach. Additionally, this research disclosed a number of significant challenges that students often encounter when practicing L2 speaking skills. These challenges encompass inadequate exposure to the target language, limited opportunities for L2 practice, in addition to the anxiety that typically associated with L2 performance.

ملخص البحث

يُعد التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من أهم المهارات التي يحتاجها طلاب الجامعات. ويمثل تحسين هذه المهارة تحدياً كبيراً خلال عملية التعلم. لذا، سعى هذا البحث إلى استكشاف تصورات الطلاب حول مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. في هذا البحث، جُمعت البيانات من خلال إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة مع خمسة طلاب من كلية التربية أبو عيسى. بعد ذلك، استُخدم أسلوب التحليل الموضوعي لتحليل البيانات المجمعة. وكشفت النتائج أن جميع المشاركين يرون أن التحدث هو أهم مهارة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وأنهم يعتقدون أن إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية هدف يسعون إليه. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشف هذا البحث عن عدد من التحديات الكبيرة التي يواجهها الطلاب عند ممارسة مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وتشمل هذه التحديات عدم كفاية التعرض للغة المستهدفة، ومحدودية فرص ممارستها، فضلاً عن القلق الذي يُصاحب أداء اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدراك، اللغة الأجنبية، التحديات

Introduction

The ability to communicate verbally, clearly expressing ideas and participating in discussions, constitutes speaking skills. These skills are essential for effective communication across different setting, ranging from informal conversations to formal presentations. Effective communication encompasses key components including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension (Lintunen et al., 2020). Developing robust speaking skills is vital for language learning and enhancing overall communication proficiency. In literature, speaking is defined as "the process of creating and exchanging meaning in a variety of circumstances using both verbal and nonverbal signals" (Chancy & Burke, 1998, p. 13). As it has been stated earlier, speaking is undoubtedly a crucial skill in the process of language learning; however, due to the greater emphasis placed on writing in the teaching of English as a foreign language, many individuals worldwide have begun to dedicate significant time and effort to improving their speaking abilities in order to reach a level where they can be considered fluent speakers. A pedagogical approach that is specifically designed to ensure accuracy in language learning often fails to meet the needs of fellow students who are striving to attain an adequate level of fluency in speech. As a result, numerous students think that they can express themselves freely once they are confident that all mistakes and undesirable behaviours have been remedied. For instance, it is preferable to formulate a complete statement at once rather than accentuating a

single word. This might have the effect of undermining learners' ability to talk clearly. Some students encounter challenges in expressing themselves in English because they concentrate excessively on spelling and grammatical instead of focussing on the practical application of words in conversation. The present research focusses on the perceptions of EFL students regarding their L2 speaking skills, along with the challenges they may encounter while practicing to this particular skill.

Research Statement

In the field of L2 learning, speaking skills play a vital role in empowering EFL students to engage in public or interpersonal communication. Throughout their undergraduate studies, each course necessitates that students present their work in class, which helps them gradually become accustomed to pitching ideas and participating in open discussions, ultimately fostering their self-confidence development. However, numerous undergraduate students often underestimate this requirement, perceiving it as a minor or insignificant task. In this context, Rajaendram (2016) noted that some EFL students struggle to respond to an interview questions in English, despite understanding the inquiries. This issue is more closely associated with challenges in language proficiency, which should be considered as barriers to effective communication.

Research Aims

This research was specifically designed to investigate the perceptions of EFL university students regarding their speaking skills in the target language. It also sought to explore the challenges they encounter when communicating in English.

Research Questions

The research questions to be answered are:

1. What perceptions do EFL university students hold towards L2 speaking skills?
2. What are the challenges that EFL university students encounter when communicating in L2?

Literature Review

Perception encompasses various senses as noted by experts in the field of education. It is defined as the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information to represent and comprehend the information presented or the surrounding environment (Schacter et al. (2011). Moreover, Goldstein (2010) asserted that perception involves signals transmitted

through the nervous system, which arise from physical or chemical stimulation of sensory system. Although perception relies on intricate functions of the nervous system, it is this processing occurs outside of conscious awareness. Gregory (1974) emphasised that perception is not merely the passive reception of these signals, it is also influenced by the recipient's learning, memory, expectation, and attention. To conclude this, in education perception refers to the way students, teachers, and other stakeholders interpret and understand their environment, including learning materials, teaching methods, and the school itself. It is shaped by a combination of knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes, and it directly influences engagement, motivation, and the overall learning process. For example, students' negative perception of a subject can negatively affect their attendance and performance.

The Importance of Perception to Learning and Teaching

Understanding this intricate relationship between perception, cognition, and learning can assist educators in formulating more effective teaching strategies. Additionally, it can help learners become more aware of their cognitive biases and mental constructs. This increased awareness can foster to a more adaptable and responsive learning environment, ultimately resulting in a more refined and effective educational experience for all involved (Cruzu, 2019). By delving into the intricacies of how our brains shape reality, both teachers and learners can better prepare themselves to navigate the challenging terrain of knowledge acquisition and personal development. Acknowledging the significance of perception in the learning process is not merely an academic endeavour; it carries practical implications that can enhance the educational experience for everyone involved. (Janessa et al., 2025).

The application of the target language in real-life contexts necessitates significant effort from learners. In this respect, Stryker and Leaver (1997) stated that communication is quite similar to learning how to ride a bicycle or play a musical instrument. Despite this fact, it is widely acknowledged that the most effective method to learn these skills is through practice, rather than merely studying them or engaging in exercises and drills. The progression of students' speaking proficiency encompasses three main stages, namely awareness, appropriation, and autonomy. Initially, during the awareness stage, students become aware of the characteristics of the target language. subsequently, in the appropriation stage, prior knowledge is integrated with the features of the target language. Ultimately, in the final stage, students are expected to achieve autonomy and effectively utilise their skills in authentic contexts (Thornbury, 2007). In their argument, Tom et al. (2013) reaffirmed that mastering speaking skills may be the most

difficult challenge for EFL learners; it tends to create obstacles when they lack a solid foundation in the target language. Moreover, among the four skills of the English language, speaking is regarded as the most challenging one to develop (Hinkel, 2006). Several factors contribute to the challenges associated with mastering speaking skills. For example, students often fear making mistakes and being evaluated by their peers in EFL classes, which can result in anxiety and diminished self-esteem (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015). Additionally, EFL students are generally less willing to engage voluntarily in oral activities (Bekleyen, 2009).

According to Kocak (2010), EFL students experience stress and anxiety in unwelcoming classrooms environments. It is vital to take into account the psychological well-being of learners throughout the educational process; therefore, classrooms must be secure and supportive (Trang et al. 2013). A positive attitude among students is essential and enhances their motivation (Sunnarborg, 2002; AL-Wreikat et al. 2010). Al Ansari (2015) conducted a research to identify the factors that may lead to anxiety when students speak in EFL classes. The findings revealed that a primary cause is the fear of negative judgement from peers in the classroom. Moreover, the findings showed that the participants do not perceive mistakes as a normal aspect of language learning. Instead, they perceive errors as detrimental to their self-image as EFL learners.

In their research, Spawa and Hassan's (2013) confirmed that the proficiency level of learners influences their classroom activities. In this context, August et al. (2005) also asserted that EFL learners with limited vocabulary require more time to learn new vocabulary items and exhibit lower engagement in conversation with their classmates. Furthermore, Hamad (2013) stated that Saudi EFL learners demonstrate less proficiency in oral skills when compared to their performance in other language learning abilities.

The Importance of Speaking Skill

In the realm of L2 literature, various definitions of speaking skill exist. For example, Fulcher (2003) posited that speaking constitutes the use of language for communication with others. This implies that speaking requires the involvement of two or more individuals, where each participant acts as both a listener and a speaker. This implies that speaking reflects a human's ability to produce sounds that convey meaning and can be comprehended by others, thereby facilitating effective communication. Furthermore, Nunan (2003) described speaking a

productive oral skill, which entails the generation of systematic verbal utterances to express meaning.

The ability to speak is the most crucial skill to develop when learning a foreign or second language. Among the four primary language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most vital in the process of learning a foreign or second language. According to Brown and Yuke (1999), speaking is the skill upon which students are most frequently evaluated in real-life contexts. Despite its significance, teaching speaking skills has often been undervalued, with many EFL/ESL teachers continuing to teach speaking skills through mere memorization of dialogues or repetitive drills. However, the contemporary world necessitates effective communication skills for learners, and it is imperative for FL teachers to equip EFL learners with the essential skills to enhance their speaking abilities and succeed in real-life scenarios (Devi, 2022).

Motivation in Language Learning and Speaking Fluency

Motivation is often perceived as a characteristic of the learner; however, it remains a contentious. There is substantial evidence suggesting that L2 motivation can pertain to various objectives, with one significant aspect being its significance in the process of learning a second language. Generally, L2 motivation can be characterised as any driving force that promotes the development of successful second-language speakers by instilling self-confidence and enhancing the momentum necessary for sustaining long-term learning (Dornyei, 1998; Abda, 2017; Yousefabadi & Ghafournia, 2023). In contrast, Gardner (1985, p.10 as cited in Dornyei, 1998) defines L2 motivation as "the extent to which individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity." Consequently, L2 motivation comprises three components: motivational intensity, a desire to learn the language, and an attitude towards the language learning process. Alternatively, its most widely accepted classification is into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Lewis, 2002), which should be recognised as playing a crucial role in encouraging students to focus on their learning journey.

Challenges in Developing Communication Skills

The challenges associated with communication skills encompass environmental, psychological, and individual barriers, including language differences, excessive information, and inadequate listening skills. Other common challenges involve a lack of trust, unclear messaging, and a mismatch between communication styles or techniques. The exquisite

language emerges from the speaker's heart, travels through his/her mouth, enters through the listener's ear, and ultimately resonates with the listener's heart.

Persuasive communication skills, by their very nature, represent a more refined applications of the communication concept. These skills consist of the ability to transmit information both efficiently and effectively. An effective communicator will possess strong verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills. What does each of these entail?" The first aspect is the physical factor. The second is a homophile factor, which refers to the similarity in personal values, educational standards, and attitudes. The third aspect is the frequency of interactions with their audience, as they in close proximity to one another. To engage audience effectively, the speaker should prepare himself and enhance both his physical appearance and social appearance by displaying an image that aligns with his or her goals and often interact with them. This can also be viewed as a criteria of ethos. The choice of language plays a significant role in persuasive communication. We tend to feel comfortable with individuals who communicate with us using positive language. The language used provides insight into the speaker's identity. For example, a name offers an overview of our identity. Language also convey our social status. Effective languages have the power to draw others towards us. A name serves as a form of language that profoundly influences an individual's identity. Names do not merely reflect identity; they shape how others perceive us. Additionally, a name aids in our self-perception and evaluation. Certain cultures have shown significant concern regarding the use of names in conversations. Language serves as a reflection of an individual's status. Often, when a person employs language that is positive, structured, and informative language, we tend to assume that such individuals are highly educated or possess a high level of education. To enhance one's speaking style, it is essential for an individual to have a broad vocabulary while ensuring that the words are appropriately applied. Moreover, engaging in public speaking can significantly enhance communication skills. This is due to the fact that ability to communicate verbally is a crucial tool for leaders, as it encompasses the skills to formulate messages, convey them to others, listen to feedback, process that feedback and maintain on-going communication (Adnan & Zainol Abidin, 2015).

Speaking Challenges in EFL Learners

Many EFL learners perceive speaking as the most challenging skill in learning English. According to Richards (2008), learners encounter several challenges related to speaking. These challenges include: (1) insufficient vocabulary required for communication. Vocabulary refers

to the words that L2 speakers utilise during conversation. EFL Students should possess a substantial vocabulary to facilitate the communication process. Doris and Jessica (2007) asserted that in authentic communication, minimal emphasis is placed on grammatical accuracy; instead, the focus is on the content and the manner of response; (2). Inadequate pronunciation. Pronunciation is an important aspect in learning a foreign language (Mahmood, 2024). Accurate pronunciation is essential for developing speaking skills. Kelly (2000) noted that a speaker who constantly mispronounces various phonemes can pose significant challenges for a speaker from a different linguistic background to understand; (3) Weakness in Grammar. If students are not familiar with the rules of grammar, they will struggle to communicate effectively in English. As noted by Celce-Murcia (2001), grammar presents difficulties since learners do not assimilate structures individually; (4) Furthermore, additional challenges associated with speaking skills include anxiety, non-verbal barriers, challenges with unequal participation and communication difficulties within groups as well as challenges in interpreting body language and facial expressions (Chishiba & Mukuka (2024; Nadeem, 2012).

Methodology

In the present research, pure qualitative methods were utilised for the purpose of data collection and analysis. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative methodologies generally focus on exploring and understanding the profound significance of human experience, behaviour, and social phenomena. They aim to address 'how' and 'why' questions by utilising non-numerical data, such as interviews and observations, to reveal detailed descriptions and underlying patterns instead of simply quantifying data. To collect the data required, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five university EFL students selected from Abu-Issa Faculty of Education, and the thematic analysis method was used to analyse the gathered data.

Data Analysis

Analysing the perceptions of the research participants using their authentic words is the next logical step in the current study. Consequently, this section focuses on analysing data collected from five semi-structured interviews conducted with the research participants.

In addressing the research questions, the initial coding process revealed a substantial number of concepts emerging from five semi-structured interviews. The first question sought to investigate students' perceptions of EFL speaking skills. The process of data analysis revealed a notable consensus among the interviewees regarding the significance of speaking skills, as they perceive them to be a reflection of their language proficiency. Throughout the interviews,

one of the participants stated, “*L2 speaking skill is very important for every student ... yes it is important and people judge our language level through the way speak. For me it is more important than the other language skills.*” In a similar, another interviewee remarked, “*I think all students share the same idea that L2 speaking skills are prioritised over the other language skills.*” The eagerness to speak proficiently and fluently in English was the first theme that emerged. All the interviewees expressed strong interest to become fluent speakers in L2. In this regard, one interviewee said, “*yes, becoming a good speaker in English is my dream, and I consistently strive to achieve that goal.*” L2 speaking mastery is one of the interesting theme emerged. Regarding this theme, the participants expressed different views. Some confirmed that they are proud of their proficiency level in L2 speaking skill. one of the interviewees noted, “*Yes, I am really happy with L2 speaking skill as I always engage with communication either with my teachers, friend or other without and difficulties.*” While one of the participants said, “*honestly I am not satisfied with speaking skills, I need to work harder for more improvement.*” Another significant theme emerged from the analysing data was the time allocated for developing speaking skills. In this regard, one of the participants stated, “*the speaking skill is not given sufficient time, it is being taught once, and that does not meet our expectation.*” Another participant reaffirmed, “*We need more time and also more practice of speaking to enhance our speaking skills.*” Sufficient exposure to L2 that can be attained through various actives in class being accomplished in L2. In this respect, one of the participant stated, “*I believe that our speaking skills can be improved through practice different activities in class under the supervision of the teacher.*” Regarding the facilities that should be provided in L2 speaking class include smart board, CD player and a projector. These equipments stimulate students to be more active in class and engage more in any task with their colleagues. One of the interviewees stated, “*I can imagine L2 speaking classes without least CD player or ... mm projector that help students to either watch or listen to enhance their speaking ... our teacher always says, the more we listen the better we speak.*” The same participants added, “*modern technology should be available in speaking class to increase the exposure to the target language.*”

The second research questions aimed to explore the challenges that EFL university students face while practicing speaking skill. Analysing the data revealed that EFL students’ perceptions of challenges primarily revolved around a lack of confidence, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes, alongside linguistic issues like insufficient vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Other significant challenges included a lack of speaking practice in class, over-reliance on their native language, and insufficient support from instructors or institutions.

The first challenge appeared is related to the insufficient self-confidence of their ability to effectively command their oral skills. In this respect, one of the participants said, *“whenever I intend to speak English, I always hesitate to do that because I do not think I can do it appropriately.”* Another participant stated, *“Using only English when speaking is difficult for many of us, I think most students have this idea.”* The amount of vocabulary that a person is supposed to possess is another obstacle highlighted by the participants. The more vocabulary students possess the more flexibility they will be in practicing their communicative skills. During the interviews, one of the participants confirmed, *“yes, yes, vocabulary help students to be good users of the target language.”* Another significant challenge *assigned by the participants* is concerned with pronunciation. Almost all the research participants agreed that pronunciation represent their significant challenge. This conclusion can be evidenced in the following quotation, *“pronunciation is my nightmare, sometimes makes me hesitate to participate in classroom activities particularly when I am not sure from pronouncing certain words.”* The insufficient exposure to the target language occupies the peak of the list of challenges reported by the participants during the interviews. As an example one of them said, *“the chances that we have to practice English is not enough even when we are in class. Most of our teachers usually mix the two languages ... they start speaking English then change into Arabic.* Analysing the data obtained also revealed that students usually pay more attention to grammatical structures whenever they speak in L2. In this regard one of the interviewees said, *“Grammar is very important if you want to speak good English. I know that this may take time but it is very important.”*

Discussion of Findings

The process of data analysis yielded several findings; however, this section focuses exclusively on the most impressive and interesting ones in connection with the research questions and the existing literature. The findings attained revealed a notable consensus among the participants regarding the importance of speaking skills for L2 learners. Almost all the participants exhibited a favourable perception of L2 speaking skills. This conclusion aligns with the research findings of AL-Wreikat & Bin Abdullah (2010), which confirmed EFL students' positive attitude towards speaking skills. Another interesting finding is that all the participants exposed high eagerness to achieve fluency in L2. This can be interpreted as an intrinsic

motivation that L2 learners hold internal incentives to achieve predetermined aims. This conclusion aligns with the research findings of Lewis (2002), in which he stated motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging students to focus on their learning journey. Another noteworthy and intriguing finding revealed a profound link between fluency in L2 (second language) and motivation. This particular connection internally promotes greater engagement and persistence in learning tasks. In this context, Thao, Vo Nguyen (2021) contended that L2 students would achieve greater success with adequate motivation.

A detailed examination of the findings attained shows that acquiring proficiency in a new language is as much a psychological endeavour as it is a cognitive one. Although grammar and vocabulary serve as the instruments, self-confidence and exposure act as the fuel and environment necessary for those instruments to work effectively. According to the research conducted by Yousefabadi & Ghafournia (2023), learners who possess high levels of self-confidence in their English language abilities are more likely to engage in communicative activities, pursue opportunities to practice their language skills, and persist through challenges and setbacks encountered in the process of language learning.

The findings obtained underscored the importance of teaching facilities, which generally refers to educational environments tailored to support second language acquisition (L2 learning), encompassing both physical spaces and technological resources. Teaching facilities help to close gaps in understanding, encourage active engagement, and assist teachers in clarifying complex concepts, thereby enhancing lessons effectiveness and reducing monotony, especially in digital learning environments. This conclusion agreed with research findings by Durdanovic (2015), who affirmed the contribution of teaching aids to the success of the teaching and learning process.

The data analysis process uncovered several intriguing challenges that EF students may face in their speaking or listening abilities. At the forefront of these challenges is anxiety. A thorough examination of the students' contributions led to the conclusion that, in the context of learning English as a foreign language, anxiety is widely viewed as the most substantial psychological barrier to achieving oral proficiency. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Nadeem et al. (2012), which confirmed that as anxiety levels rise, academic performance tends to decline. However, it can also be perceived as a motivating factor that encourages students to better prepare themselves for successful performance. This conclusion is in agreement with

Ahmad (2021), who emphasised that anxiety could have a positive influence on students' performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained, the researchers formulated a number of intriguing conclusions, which are summarized as follows: several significant issues regarding students' perceptions of EFL classrooms have been identified. Firstly, the significance of speaking in EFL classrooms is highly emphasised. This is evident from the contributions made by students during the semi-interviews, where all participants expressed that speaking is crucial for learning, as it facilitates interaction and communication in our daily lives.

Secondly, the researchers discovered how teachers' methods of teaching speaking can impact the students' speaking skills. This is evident from the students' responses; all participants indicated that the teacher's approach to teaching speaking can enhance students' speaking abilities. If the teacher's method is effective, it can engage students more effectively and spark their interest in learning to speak, which is a crucial factor in whether students can comprehend the learning material or not.

Thirdly, the researchers identified the challenges students faced in their speaking skills. This is evident from students' contributions throughout the interviews, where they expressed challenges in pronouncing words correctly, similar to native English speakers. They also mentioned that they struggle to articulate their opinions due to a limited vocabulary, often relying on bilingual dictionaries or Google Translate to look up challenging words before completing their tasks. Students are clearly aware of what they wish to convey in their native language; however, when required to translate their thoughts into the target language, they frequently become confused about how to combine and utilise the appropriate vocabulary.

Other challenges related to psychological and affective factors. They include (1) fear and anxiety: shyness, nervousness, and high anxiety (communication apprehension) prevent learners from speaking in L2; (2) low confidence and self-esteem: embarrassment about making mistakes; (3) motivation: lack of internal or external drive to speak. Additionally, challenges related to environmental and external factors. They encompass (1) unsupportive environment: lack of English-speaking communities or peers to practice with; (2) mother tongue interference: habitual use of the first language in daily life; (3) limited practice: insufficient opportunities to use English actively outside the classroom.

Pedagogical Implication

EFL Teachers should encourage students to overcome self-doubt, ensuring they do not feel incapable of speaking in front of others. To communicate in English confidently, it is essential for EFL students to overcome their shyness.

Motivation plays a crucial role in learning English. Students can find motivation from their teachers, peers, and even their parents.

EFL students should be supported to feel more at ease and self-assured while speaking English. Those who feel anxious about public speaking are advised to practice proper breathing, maintain calmness, and remember the reasons that inspire them to learn the language.

To facilitate English speaking among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, the primary recommendation is to establish a supportive, low-anxiety, and interactive learning environment that prioritizes frequent, authentic practice rather than perfect grammatical precision. Essential strategies focus on enhancing confidence, increasing motivation, and providing numerous communication opportunities.

Classroom Strategies

EFL teachers should utilize various strategies to help students improve their speaking skills. These strategies include (1) emphasizing student talking time. This strategy can be implemented through designing lessons to maximize the duration students engage in speaking. This generally entails (1) minimizing teacher talk time and promoting pair or group activities; (2) fostering a positive and inclusive environment. This strategy can be practiced by establishing a safe space where students feel comfortable taking risks and making errors without the fear of embarrassment. It can also be employed by providing consistent encouragement and constructive feedback to enhance their confidence.

Using Task-Based and Communicative Activities

It is important to engage students in meaningful tasks that require real communication, such as (1) role-plays: simulate real-life situations to practice functional language; (2) discussions and debates: choose topics of interest to students to stimulate genuine conversation and critical thinking; (3) information gap activities: design tasks where students must communicate with a partner to get unique, essential information to complete a task; (4) storytelling: have students tell or retell stories, which can be a fun way to practice vocabulary and sentence structure; (5) provide language scaffolding: offer support mechanisms to help students express themselves.

This includes providing useful phrases, sentence starters, vocabulary lists, and clear models of target language use; (6) focus on fluency first, accuracy second: during speaking activities, concentrate primarily on the student's ability to convey meaning and communicate effectively, rather than constantly correcting every grammatical error. Post-activity feedback sessions can address common mistakes in a less intimidating manner; (7) integrate technology: utilize digital tools like language learning apps, online discussion forums, or video conferencing to connect students with other English speakers or provide additional practice opportunities. TED Talks can also be a valuable resource for exposure to authentic language and presentation styles; (8) use visual aids and realia: incorporate pictures, charts, real-life objects, and gestures to aid comprehension and provide contextual references that reduce cognitive load.

Individual/Self-Study Recommendations

EFL students should be encouraged to (1) engage in daily English-speaking practice, both within and outside the classroom; (2) watch English-language movies or TV shows, listen to podcasts, and read books or articles that interest them to acquire new vocabulary and grasp natural expressions; (3) find a language exchange partner or join an English club to practice with peers or native speakers in a low-pressure environment; (4) record their own speech to help them identify and improve their pronunciation and intonation over time; and (5) reflect on any unfamiliar words or phrases encountered, turning every conversation into a valuable learning experience.

References

Ahmad, M. R. (2021). The Relationship between Study Anxiety and Academic Achievement Among Libyan University Students. The Eighth International Scientific and Educational Conference: Modern Trends in Educational and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Education, Abu Issa

Al-Wreikat, S., Abdullah, B., & Kabilan, K. (2010). An Evaluation of Jordanian EFL Teachers' In-Service Training Courses Teaching Techniques Effectiveness. English Language Teaching, 3, 4, pp. 18-27.

Ansari, S. (2015). Speaking anxiety in ESL/EFL classrooms: A holistic approach and practical study. *International Journal of Education Investigations*, 2, 4, pp. 38–46.

Abda, K. (2017). Assessing the Factors That Affect Teaching Speaking Skills: The Case of Robe Teachers' College, English Department Second Year Students. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 3, 5, pp. 285-299.

August, D., Carlo, M., Dressler, C. & Snow, C. (2005). The critical role of vocabulary development for English language learners. *Learning disabilities research & practice*, 20, 1, pp. 50-57.

Bekleyen, N. (2009). Helping teachers become better English students: Causes, effects, and coping strategies for foreign language listening anxiety. *System*, 37, 4, pp. 664-675.

Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1999). *Teaching the Spoken Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celce-murcia. 2001. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. United State of America: Heinle & Heinle.

Chancy, A. L. & Burke, T. L. (1989). Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Chishiba, G. and Mukuka J. (2024). Communication Skills Challenges Experienced by First-Year University Students: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science* 37, 6, pp. 465–477.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage Publication.

Cruzu, F. D. (2019). Students' perceptions on the teaching of Values education in Lumbangan National High School. Retrieved from:

<https://ojs.aaresearchindex.com/index.php/AAJMRA/article/view/8338>

Doris & Jessica. (2007). Journal Deaaries Fitria, RW. A Study on the students English Speaking problems in speaking performance.

Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 31, 3, 117. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480001315X>

Durdanovic, M. (2015). The use of teaching Aids and their Importance for Students' Music Education. (*IJCRSFE*) *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education*, 3, 2, pp.33-40.

Fulcher, G. (2003). *Testing Second Language Speaking*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Gregory, R. L. (1974). *Concepts and Mechanisms of Perception*. London: Duckworth.

Goldstein, E. B. (2010). *Sensation and Perception*. (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Hammad, E. A. & Ghali, A. (2015). Speaking anxiety level of Gaza EFL pre-service teachers: Reasons and sources. *World Journal of English Language*, 5, 3, pp. 52-64.

Hinkel, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, 1, pp. 109-131.

Nadeem, M., Ali, A., Maqbool, S. & Zaidi, U. (2012). Impact of anxiety on the academic achievement of students having different mental abilities at university level in Bahawalpur (Southern Punjab) Pakistan. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4, 3, pp. 519-528.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: Mc Graw Hill.

Janessa P. Billante, Judeah L. Balida, Leonardo L. Cabildo, Charles Abanilla (2025). Exploring Student's Perception on Values Education Program. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 8, pp. 17-25.

Kelly, G. (2000). *How to teach pronunciation*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Kocak, M. (2010). A novice teacher's action research on EFL learners' speaking anxiety. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 3, pp. 138-143.

Lewis, C. (2002). *Lesson Study: A handbook of teacher-led instructional change*. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools.

Lintunen, P., Mutta, M. and Peltonen, P. (2020). Fluency in L2 learning and use. *Multilingual Matters*.

Mahmood, R. Q. (2025). Assessing motivation and challenges of L2 pronunciation improvement beyond the classroom. *Language Testing in Focus an International Journal*, 11, pp. 1-20.

Devi, Malladi. Revathi (2022). The importance of Speaking and Listening abilities for EFL students. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research*, 5.7. <https://doi.org/10.31426/ijamsr.2022.5.7.5511>

Rajaendram, R. (2016, June 12). English skills vital for all. The Star Online. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2016/06/12/english-skills-vital-for-all/>

Richards, (2008). *Teaching Listening and Speaking from Theory to Practice*. New York: Cambridge University.

Siahaan, S. 2008). The English Paragraph. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu

Spawa, C. & Hassan, F. (2013). “I doesn't know English”: Beliefs and practices in the teaching of speaking of ESL classroom. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 21, 2, pp. 449-460.

Schacter, D., Gilbert, D., Wegner, D. & Hood, B. (2011). Sensation and Perception. In Psychology, S. Alvarado, B. Kanter-Braem, K. Manz, P. Masciopinto, E. Mckenna, D. Nelson, C. Williams, K. Korek, W. Wozniak (eds.), American Psychological Association, TOPPS: Texas. <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/topss/lessons/sensation.pdf>

Stryker, S. B., & Leaver, B. L. (Eds.). (1997). Content-based instruction in foreign language education: Models and methods. Georgetown University Press.

Sunnarborg, P. (2002). Exploring attitude and attitude change in second language learners. Practicing Thoughtful Inquiry and Reflection.

Tom, A. A., Johari, A., Rozaimi, A. & Huzaimah, S. (2013). Factors contributing to communication apprehension among pre-university students. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2, 8, pp, 665-669.

Thornbury, S. (2007). *How to Teach Speaking*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Trang, T., Baldauf Jr, B. & Moni, K. (2013). Investigating the development of foreign language anxiety: An autobiographical approach. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34, 7, pp. 709-726.

Vo Nguyen Da Thao (2021). The impacts of motivation and task types on L2 oral fluency development in higher education in Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1,3, pp. 2768-4563

Yousefabadi, Y. & Ghafournia, N. (2023). The Impact of Self-Confidence on English Language Proficiency. 2nd International Conference on Health Educational Sciences Psychology. At: Helsinki- Finland.

