

Research Article

Factors Associated With Speaking English as a Foreign Language Effectively in Higher Education

Marnina¹, Seli Marlina Radja Leba², Ranta Butarbutar^{2*}, Angla Florensia Sauhenda³

¹Department of English Literature, Universitas Musamus Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

²Department of English Language Education, Universitas Musamus Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

³Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, Universitas Musamus Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

Abstract.

This study aimed to investigate the factors that influence the effective speaking of English as a foreign language (EFL) in higher education. Data were collected through an open-ended, in-depth interview with seven interviewees and analyzed using the thematic analysis (TA) technique. The results showed six significant themes related to effective student speaking: aptitude, motivation, opportunity, learning media, learning strategy, and language function. Future research must collect more diverse instances of effective speaking functions and components. Multiple examples of speaking in many genres developed by demographically diverse students in natural settings will provide more realistic and complete views of schoolchildren's increasing ability to use nominal expressions to construct and communicate meaning for academic objectives.

Keywords: Aptitude, EFL, Higher Education, Speaking Skills

Corresponding Author: Ranta Butarbutar; email: ranta@unmus.ac.id

Published 26 May 2023

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Marnina et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICASI Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

In educational techniques, a language is a kind of communication that is fully integrated for adequate speaking, listening, reading, and writing processes[1]. The interactive process is typically expressed when speaking and includes the creation, receiving, and digestion of information. Speech is context-dependent in terms of both its structure and meaning. This encompasses the common experiences, physical setting, and motivating elements of the individuals. It frequently unfolds haphazardly and is open-ended. Speech, on the other hand, is not always predictable. It is possible to identify and plot language functions that regularly appear in a given discourse, such as denying an invitation or asking for time off [2–4]. The importance of speech during communication cannot be overstated. It is required of teachers to assist students in developing their


OPEN ACCESS

oral communication abilities. According to [2], a speaker's ability and habit impact the success of any interaction. They need to be able to anticipate and deliver the expected patterns of a given discourse situation. Speakers should also be able to handle specific aspects such as taking turns, rephrasing and presenting information, redirection, and feedback. It is paramount for the learner to adopt appropriate facial expressions to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service, including using the correct vocabulary to describe the sought item and repeating or emphasizing words to clarify the description. However, when the clerk still fails to understand, appropriate facial expressions are used to either express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service. [5] stated that additional skills and knowledge that can be addressed through training are the production of sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures, intonations, and the effective application of grammatical structures. He further stated that, in as much as dialogues and conversations are visibly and extensively used in language schools, a teacher can select from various other activities. Six different labor types were identified and used to facilitate good classroom speaking exercises. (1) For clarity and precision, the learner merely needs to repeat a phrase or structure (e.g., "Excuse me." or "Can you help me?"), (2) repetition of phonological or grammatical issues, such as minimal pairings or a series of imperative phrases, (3) responsiveness: to answer questions and remarks from both the teacher and fellow students, such as yes or no. (4) Interpersonal Dialogues used to establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews or causal conversation role-plays, (5) Transactional Dialogues are used to exchange information, such as those related to gathering interviews, role plays, or debates, and (6) Extensive Monologues lasting more than a few minutes, such as short speeches, oral reports, or summaries.

Furthermore, [6] stated that good language students always search for linguistic patterns in terms of communication. They usually pay special attention to the form of exercise given, evaluating, categorizing, and synthesizing it, and are constantly on the lookout for new ways to sort information. These students try to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant clues. Besides, they are interested in how elements interact or relate to one another by using a basis for this analysis to obtain the right information needed. Naturally, the more learners practice this form of exercise, the better they become. It has been observed that individuals usually learn a second or third foreign language faster than their first because they tend to pay attention to its relevant formal aspects.

[6] emphasized the importance of good behavioral communication for effective speaking in a higher setting. It is relevant to practice pronunciation or makeup lines. This entails seeking out native speakers, going to the movies, and participating in cultural activities. The learner starts a conversation with the teacher or classmates using the target language and is willing to do it repeatedly. The learner normally makes the most of every opportunity to speak in class. Certain individuals appear to stand out and are called on more frequently during any particular session.

On the other hand, chances of speaking need to be structured if it is to aid language development. Surprisingly, the selected participants were ashamed to practice since they lacked the relevant information for formulating ideas, critical thinking, elaboration, research, presentation, clarification, and evaluation. Furthermore, their speech became more complex even when the English lecturer taught them to use Indonesian. Participants only got a few chances to express themselves in English. Surely, if such rarely-used language was utilized for instructional purposes in the classroom, the students would have no choice but to listen to their teacher. As a result, teachers or lecturers are supposed to be perceived as role models and wonderful motivators for these students to practice Full-English during the teaching process[7]. The second level of complexity was based on the fact that participants were concerned with knowing how to combine specific aspects of language, such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence). This also includes understanding when, why, and how to fabricate these attributes (communication and sociolinguistic competence). As previously stated, the empirical and practical gaps in the current study are limited to the effectiveness of speaking skills as coined by various experts and scholars. This research outlines the strategies for effective speakers to express themselves to fill the gaps and capture the readers' attention. It shows how to organize a successful speaking lesson and assess the students' abilities. Additionally, it offers to respond to the following research question to get started and gain more attention: What are the most important factors that influence students' English-speaking abilities?

2. Methods

Seven undergraduates were selected to participate in this study to ensure the investigation was successful and straightforward [8]. There were five females among them, while the rest were males. The participants were between the ages of 20 to 25 years. They

were in the second semester. The participants were all students of the Department of English Education at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Musamus Merauke University in Papua province. Furthermore, their native language is Indonesian, although English was used as a teaching and learning tool to get to know them better in the classroom. They took it upon themselves to organize a small practice group to obtain additional information. On the other hand, this could be a vacuum, especially if they were working on tasks given by another lecturer that needed urgent submission. The participants were selected on purpose, and as a result, they displayed self-initiative by organizing small groups with comparable perceptions, motivation, and encouragement to develop their English skills. However, when asked about their department during the initial interview, they responded "English major," irrespective of whether they were not fluent in the language. They were motivated to organize small practice groups to make up for this shortfall. They were labeled as follows: Participant1: "P1," Participant2: "P2," Participant3: "P3," Participant4: "P4", Participant5: "P5", Participant6: "P6," and Participant7: "P7" to get to know them.

An open-ended interview was held with all participants to assist in the in-depth collection of data. According to [9], this was a difficult assignment because one needed to be aware of and handle the numerous tasks at once. The interviewee's engagement, which is a dialogue, required to be closely observed, reactions and efforts to change the conversation needed to be analyzed, predicted, and guided. At the same time, the overall situation was logistically and emotionally controlled. Furthermore, [10] asserted that interviewing is the primary means of contemporary social research to address pending issues. As a result, the typical social survey interview had been "deconstructed" and "theorized" since its inception because it appeared in several forms. Symbolic interactionism sought to "open" the discourse and elicit real accounts. Therefore, the study interview guidelines and a cell phone as a recording tool were used. Open-ended interviews necessitated some prior analyses of the research issue because the questions were based on existing knowledge. These were pre-planned and designed using the interview guide, which covers the main topics of the study. It focused on the structure of the interview topic, although it needed not to be strictly adhered to because the goal is to learn more about the research theme. This was realized by obtaining similar information from each participant and directing them on what to discuss [11]. The following questions were asked to meet the objectives of this study: "Would you like to share the wonderful experiences encountered when mastering the English language?"

What were the most difficult speaking functions? What advice do you have for first-year students who are unsure about their speaking ability? Surprisingly, each participant answered these questions within 40 to 55 minutes.

The gathered data will next be analyzed, which was made possible by using theme analysis [12]. It is described as a method for locating, analyzing, and reporting themes. Thematic analysis meticulously arranges and summarizes the collected data collection. But it also entails interpreting a variety of features of the research topic. Thematic analysis is a realist or an essentialist method for reporting on the experiences, meanings, and actuality of participants. It is also a constructionist approach that is used to look at how social discourses shape events, realities, meanings, and experiences. Additionally, thematic analysis can serve as a "contextualization" technique, straddling the essentialist and constructionist camps and defined by theories like critical realism, which recognizes how people gain knowledge from their experiences. In detail, the interview results are thematically shown in Figure 1.

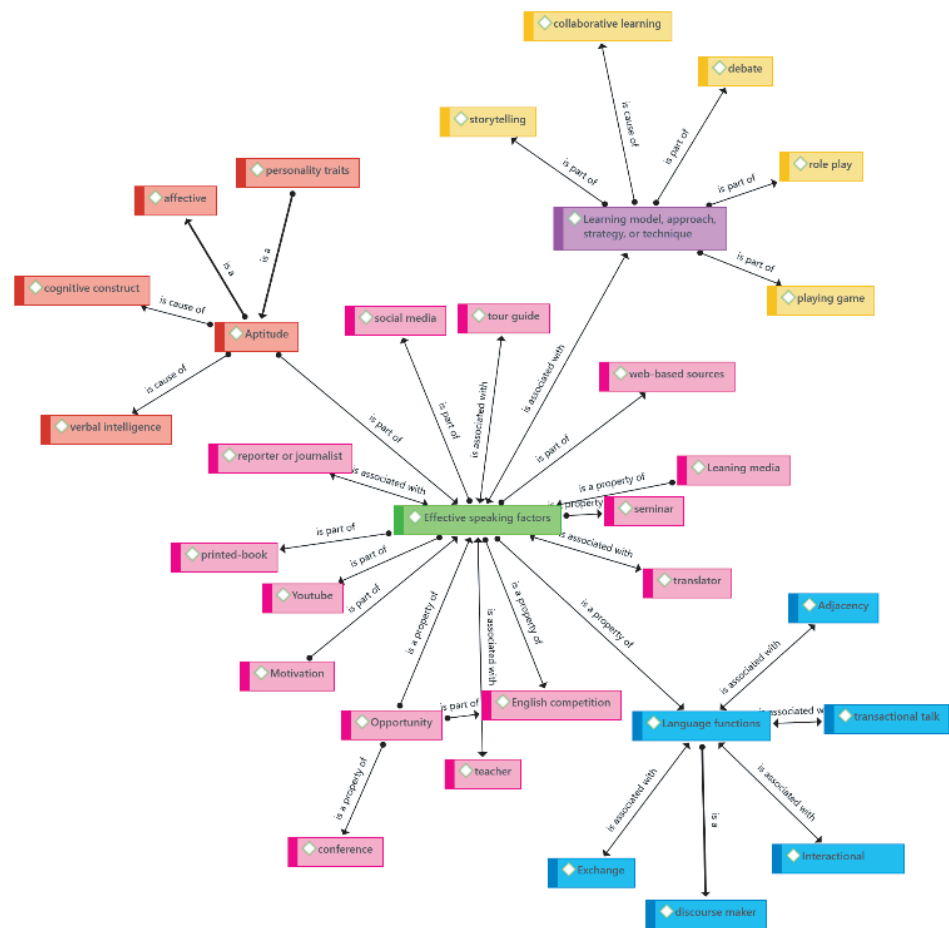


Figure 1: Effective factors speaking.

3. Results and Discussion

This research described aspects of language and what skilled speakers did to fill in the gaps, attract their listeners' attention and overcome the research issues. It demonstrated how to organize a good speaking class and access the students' speaking abilities. The following research question was presented to get started and garner greater attention: What are the most important aspects that influenced the pupils' English speaking abilities? Six themes were reported as beneficial elements that the students exploited to improve their EFL speaking skills in the classroom. These include (1) aptitude, (2) motivation, (3) opportunity, (4) learning medium employed, (5) learning model, approach, strategy, technique, and (6) language use. Every detail was meticulously crafted.

This study investigated and elaborated on elements influencing students' English speaking skills in the context of EFL higher education. It started with six key elements and a few sub-themes that are incredibly important for educators who want to proclaim a global standard for spoken language teaching and learning. The study aimed to ensure that all participants employed traditional and new professional oral communication tactics. Cross (1990) carried out similar research using other abilities, such as written communication, to investigate metacognitive knowledge that might influence the process and output of writing as a foreign language (EFL). It was further established that writing is a complicated activity influenced by several linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions. The student's knowledge, cohesive devices, content preparation, and metacognitive understanding seem to influence the quality of the written material [14- 15]. Teachers need to assist students in improving their speaking and overall oral abilities by evaluating the activities of outstanding speakers, assignments that need to be given in class, and the pupils' special requirements [16- 18].

[19] stated that attitudes and motivation are not always linked to a person's ability to speak a certain language. These are made up of three parts: (a) motivation to learn the language, (b) desire to belong to the target language group, and (c) attitude toward the learning situation. According to [20], aptitude was important in more complex studies with similarities like domain specificity and explicit-implicit tensions. These types of study designs tend to impact how FL aptitude is widely perceived in applied linguistics. Therefore, it is believed that language aptitude research centered on these two constructs can potentially return FL to the mainstream of SLA and practical linguistics. To persuade readers, this study is supported by linguists and language scholars, and

psychologists capable of contributing to language aptitude[21]. FL aptitude tests need to be based on verbal material, irrespective of the nature or state of any important period, because most existing assessments are based on this type of material.

This study reported that students' speaking success was influenced by their level of motivation. According to [22 - 23], motivation is vital in language learning because it helps second-language communicators succeed by instilling confidence in them. It also generates learners who continue to participate in learning after achieving a specific goal. English teachers are advised to adopt a range of tactics to motivate their pupils both in and outside the classroom. Positive self-concept and attitude, high self-esteem, clear comprehension of set goals, ongoing active participation, and the importance of a favorable atmosphere contribute to the success of the language learning process. According to [24], attitudes, self-beliefs, objectives, engagement, environmental support, and personal traits influence motivation in language acquisition. Additionally, three specific factors motivate language learning: self-confidence, a feeling of success and satisfaction, and favorable teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions. All three components are assumed to be engaged in the motivational growth process [24].

Similarly, this research defined and classified verbal intelligence as an aptitude component. More positively, some school of thought[6] states that to become a good communicator, one must constantly analyze, categorize, and synthesize language patterns, such as cognitive and metacognitive processes [25]. It was also concluded that there are separate speaking components that students need to manage, such as taking turns, rephrasing, providing feedback, and redirecting [2]. They also need to concentrate on the success of the interaction as well as adjust speech components such as vocabulary, tempo, and complexity of grammar structures to improve listeners' comprehension and involvement [3], [26- 27].

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, students' performance in speaking skills is greater in higher education, proving that what they were taught in disciplinary learning and socializing is crucial to academic advancement. Therefore, it is critical to assess how these students produce, receive, and digest information, which is all part of a meaningful interactive process of speaking. The people, who speak, share experiences associated with their physical surroundings, and reasons for communicating, all influence the structure and meaning

of speech. Every study has flaws, including this one, which collected data from a small group of volunteers in the same department rather than a varied range of people. It also failed to elicit terms with specific complexities. Despite being based on prior theoretical and empirical work; the adopted analysis was insensitive to capturing the real range of variation among the students. Future research needs to gather more realistic and diversified examples of effective speaking functions and components to help schoolchildren communicate meaningfully and effectively. This is realized by analyzing diverse speech types obtained from different students in real-life situations[28].

References

- [1] Florez MC. Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills. ERIC Digest; 1999.
- [2] Burns A, Joyce H. Focus on Speaking. ERIC; 1997.
- [3] Brown HD. Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy. Upper Saddle River (NJ): Prentice Hall Regents; 1994.
- [4] Lewis M. New Ways in Teaching Adults. New Ways in TESOL Series II: Innovative Classroom Techniques. ERIC; 1997.
- [5] Douglas Brown H. Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy. USA: Prentice Hall Regents; 1994.
- [6] Rubin J. "What the" good language learner" can teach us. TESOL Q. 1975;9(1):41–51.
- [7] Butarbutar R, Titik M, Betaubun M, Nasrawati M, Bawawa M. A Significance Study of Finding Difficult Words Technique. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icss-18.2018.279>.
- [8] Merriam SB. Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. Jossey-Bass; 1988.
- [9] Tellis W. Application of a case study methodology. Qual Rep. 1997;3(3):1–19.
- [10] Atkinson P, Silverman D. Kundera's Immortality: the interview society and the invention of the self. Qual Inq. 1997;3(3):304–25.
- [11] Taylor MC. Interviewing. Qual. Res. Heal. Care. 2005;39–55.
- [12] Braun V, Clarke V. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. Qual Res Sport Exerc Health. 2019;11(4):589–97.
- [13] Xu W, Zammit K. Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. Int J Qual Methods. 2020;19:1609406920918810.

- [14] Scarcella R. Some key factors affecting English learners' development of advanced literacy. *Dev. Adv. Lit. first Second Lang. Mean. with power.* 2002;209–226.
- [15] Yaakob SB. Factors affecting students' writing skills in primary schools. *Univ. Teknol. Mara, Bachelor Educ.* 2015.
- [16] Butarbutar R. How does Technology Vocaroo Improve Students' Speaking Ability? A Study from Learner, Teacher, and Researcher's Perspective. *J. Posit. Psychol. Wellbeing.* 2021;5(3):1635–40.
- [17] Butarbutar R, Uspayanti R, Manuhutu N, Palangngan ST. Analyzing of puzzle local culture-based in teaching english for young learners. *IOP Conf Ser Earth Environ Sci.* 2019;343(1):12208.
- [18] Butarbutar R. Learner's perception of task difficulties in technology-mediated task-based language teaching. *Englisia J. Lang. Educ. Humanit.* 2021;9(1):129–44.
- [19] Sparks R, Ganschow L. Aptitude for learning a foreign language. *Ann Rev Appl Linguist.* 2001;21:90–111.
- [20] Wen ZE, Biedroń A, Skehan P. Foreign language aptitude theory: Yesterday, today and tomorrow. *Lang Teach.* 2017;50(1):1–31.
- [21] Carroll JB. *Human cognitive abilities: A survey of factor-analytic studies.* Cambridge University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511571312>.
- [22] Dembo MH, Nicklin J, Griffiths C. *Motivation and learning strategies for college success: A self-management approach.* Routledge; <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203823149>.
- [23] Ebata M. Motivation factors in language learning. *Internet TESL J.* 2008;14(4):27–36.
- [24] Hussin S, Maarof N, D'cruz JV. Sustaining an interest in learning English and increasing the motivation to learn English: an enrichment program. *Internet TESL J.* 2001;7(5):1–7.
- [25] Leba SM, Butarbutar R, Werang BR. Exploring the English Learning Strategies of an Indigenous Papuan Student of Indonesia. *Qual Rep.* 2021;26(9). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4881>.
- [26] Butarbutar R, Leba SMR, Nur S, Weda S. Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning-Based Instruction in Teaching Speaking EFL in Indonesian Context. 2022.
- [27] Butarbutar R, Leba SMR, S. Nur S, Weda S. Integrating Intercultural Communication on Social Media and Learning Materials Encourages Speaking EFL Motivation. 2022.
- [28] Uspayanti R, Butarbutar R, Hiskya HJ, Ainani AF. Local Wisdom and its Implication for Nature Conservation. *Rev. Int. Geogr. Educ. Online.* 2021;11(5):292–302.