SMART
(Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)
Volume 11, No. 1, January 2025, Page. 57-67
p-ISSN: 2356-2048 e-ISSN: 2356-203x

DELVING STUDENTS' NEEDS TO DEVELOP ENGLISH COURSE SPEAKING MATERIAL

Sukma Shinta Yunianti[1], Afi Normawati[2], Rolisda Yosintha[3]
[1,2,3]English Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Tidar
Email Correspondence: sukmashinta@untidar.ac.id

Abstract

Speaking is the most important language skill to master. Some questions come up regarding the general English language requirements, particularly for non-English major students. This study aims to analyze students' needs to improve their speaking skill. In this qualitative study, an e-questionnaire was distributed to 133 students using a convenience sampling procedure. It drew student profiles, student needs, and their learning methods. The results indicated that the scarcity of speaking opportunities and the stigma attached to using proper English grammar were the main sources of their speaking anxiety. Combining PjBL and case study help to enhance the students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *EFL, Speaking Skill, Students' Needs*

INTRODUCTION

Mastering English language skills has become a crucial need for students in the current era of globalization. In order for students to succeed in their employment, higher education institutions make sure they have not only specific knowledge but also strong English communication skills. In English as well as experts in their respective professions, Indonesian universities offer English language education (Sri Andayani, 2022). One of the most important language proficiencies to master when learning English is oral communication ability. However, helping students become more fluent in speaking is not an easy job for lecturers. Lecturers must come up with efficient teaching strategies, and one of them is to develop materials that are specifically catered to the needs of each student; and to produce a powerful tool that helps teachers create content that is in line with the intended aims and instructional needs of learners, analyzing learners' needs is necessary (Menggo et al., 2019).

Creation is distributed under the Creative Commons License Attribution Share Alike 4.0 International Published in https://ejournal.umpri.ac.id/index.php/smart/index SMART Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

Although there have been previous researches on analyzing students' needs for the development of speaking skill materials, it is important to revisit this topic because students' needs can vary depending on their social contexts. In addition, regular assessments of students' needs are crucial for keeping curriculum, policies, and teaching plans up-to-date and responsive to their changing requirements.

Prioritizing and assisting students in improving their speaking skills is crucial in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Indonesia. When choosing learning objectives, activities, and instructional resources, one must exercise care to achieve fluency and appropriateness in English speaking (Cahyono & Widiati, 2015). However, (Roza, 2013) discovered that rather than focusing on useful communication skills, university-level English training places a greater emphasis on comprehending the syntactic and lexical norms of the language. Meanwhile, (Farhani et al., 2020) in their study found that Indonesian students struggle with speaking problems in English due to both linguistic and nonlinguistic issues, including their reluctance to use English in everyday life and their various origins. In addition, he argued that the students' limited exposure to the language and inability to communicate with fluent English speakers make these difficulties worse. Importantly, similar problems exist in Indonesian schools where English is not the main language, highlighting the need for examining and resolving these problems in educational programs. (Huda, 2020) in his research identified some issues in students' learning, including the limited focus on promoting students' oral communication skills due to the emphasis in grammar and reading exercises, lack of quality textbooks and materials, and lack of self-awareness among the students regarding their English language learning process. Therefore, students need to learn more than just grammar and semantics in order to become fluent in a foreign language. They also need to develop the ability to understand how native speakers interact with one another in a systematic way, which will motivate them and improve their performance as a whole.

Prioritizing and assisting students in improving their speaking abilities is crucial for successful language acquisition and their ability to participate in meaningful conversation in English in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) training in Indonesia. This emphasis not only supports the development of their language but also gives students crucial communication skills. To accomplish this goal,

circumstances and situations that promote and support interpersonal verbal communication must be created. Employing the right teaching strategies and materials that address the needs and goals of the students is crucial to creating a conducive learning environment (Warohma et al., 2022). Doing this can better engage students and increase their motivation to learn. Further based on their research, they found that the majority of the students wanted to improve their speaking for daily communication; however, the materials and environment did not support their learning. Meanwhile, a study conducted by (Menggo et al., 2019) showed that it is pivotal to develop materials that promote critical and creative problem-solving, communication, collaboration, ICT literacy, and active citizenship skills. Furthermore, it emphasized how important it is to modify these resources so that they correspond to the demands of learners' future workplaces, with a special emphasis on communication and collaboration.

Conducting needs assessment is crucial while developing and implementing language courses (Aisyah et al., 2018). A need analysis is performed to identify what is required by the learners. This analysis helps to discover the needs of the learners, resulting in more individualized and effective learning (Mahripa, 2014). Furthermore, (Chatzikyriakou & Zafiri, 2019) emphasize that analyzing the students' needs means manage to keep the students motivated during the lesson. As the initial stage of designing a learning program, it is crucial in determining some aspects, including the development of the syllabus, the choice of the materials, the teaching and learning methods, and the evaluation techniques. In other words, the development of instructional materials for students depends on creating an effective educational program by thoroughly assessing their needs. This needs assessment is crucial for ensuring the program's success and the achievement of its objectives, particularly when it comes to helping students become proficient language learners (Sularti et al., 2019). To improve the educational experience, promote better learning outcomes, and ultimately result in language acquisition success, material developers should be able to adapt their programs to match the particular needs of learners. In short, taking students' needs into consideration is a key component of creating an effective and powerful educational system.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed qualitative method. To collect the data, an e-questionnaire was distributed to the students during the analysis step. It distributed to 133 (one hundred and thirty-three) students who took the English Course in one of the state universities in Central Java. They were selected through convenience sampling procedure. This can be seen from the ease of access and willingness of the participants. Apart from that, the researcher teaches at this location. Furthermore, the e-questionnaire was adapted from (Robinett et al., 1988) and (Aliki et al., 2021) with necessary alteration to suit the students' learning needs. This type of e-questionnaire was written in Indonesian. It was divided into third sections. The first section involved gathering information about the students' profile in learning English. The second and third sections concentrated on the students' speaking skill and learning method. To collect broader information from the participants, open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire where they could write down any information that was not covered in the questions provided. Then, the data was examined descriptively to portray the students' needs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Profile

This section covered several points such as long the students learn English, their English proficiency level, and reasons in learning English. Considering to findings, most of the students have spent 12 years learning English. The students confirmed that they had been learning English since elementary school to high school to be precise. However, some stated that they only learned English when they were in the middle school to high school. There are even those who learn English while in high school. Since they have been learnt English for many years, this result provides an assumption that, at least, their English proficiency level can be categorized to advance.

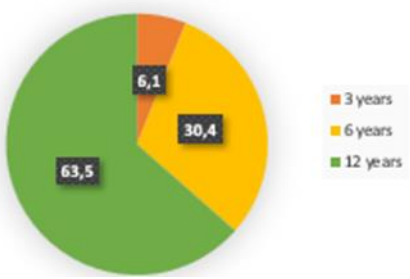


Figure 1: Length of Time Study English (%)

Unfortunately, the length of study English is inversely proportional to the students' English proficiency levels. 60.2% of students claimed to be at the beginner level and 39% of students claimed to be at the intermediate level. This is in line with the result of those who tend to position themselves as passive rather than active learners.

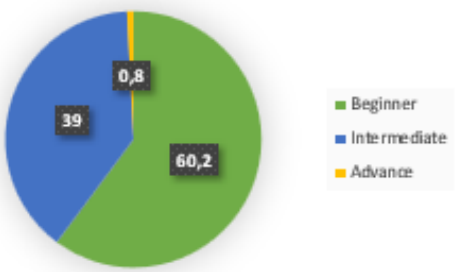


Figure 2: English Proficiency Level (%)

To gain further information about this phenomenon, the students explained their reasons for learning English. Among the students, some reported that:

"It's needed to improve self-quality"

"For learning needs at school"

"It's for work needs"

"It exists at every level of education"

"It's a mandatory subject at school"

"For school grades"

"To be able to work in various countries"

"For travelling"

Besides that, studied English for more than one year but English proficiency is at beginner level. The answer to this oddity can be found in the student's responses about their difficulties in learning English. Some of them mentioned that:

"Rarely used in daily life. I often speak mother language every day"

"Lack of supportive environment for learning English, especially speaking"

"Lack of speaking practice, do a lot of questions from textbook"

"Difficult to pronounce English vocabularies"

"There is an anxiety when asked to communicate in English"

"Difficult in using grammar"

"Confuse how to respond using English"

"I haven't found suitable learning methods and resources"

"The learning model applied doesn't suit my needs"

Those excerpts indicate two points of discussion. First, what the students said presents a negative correlation between their English proficiency level and their English learning process, particularly at the school. This can be seen from what they said such as "For learning needs at school", "It exists at every level of education", "It's a mandatory subject at school", and "For school grades". Those confirm that the students learn English only to fulfil their academic obligation. Furthermore, most of them learn English only at the school. Supported by their learning experiences, the students emphasized that when they were at school, they focused more on learning grammar and reading than speaking. Moreover, amid school graduation exams, the English material tested refers to reading and writing skills. This is clearly seen from their excerpt such as "Lack of speaking, do a lot of questions from textbook". "Difficult in using grammar" and "Confuse how to respond using English" express the students' anxiety, fear, and lack of self-confidence. Those expression illustrate that their biggest worry is the grammatical error. In other words, they actually able to respond but think too much about grammatical error. Furthermore, "I haven't found suitable learning methods and resources', "The learning model applied doesn't suit my needs", and "There is an anxiety when asked to communicate in English" also emphasized that the teaching and learning process is an extrinsic factor that influences students' enthusiasm. In other words, it made them less enthusiastic to improve their English ability.

Even worse, the students felt afraid and hesitant when asked to speak English. It also confirms (De Dios & Agudo, 2013)'s finding that foreign language anxiety does not only occur in beginners but experienced learners also suffer it. Of course, the phenomenon is influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. However, it cannot be denied that an interesting learning process makes students not only feel comfort and safe. (Ali et al., 2020) stated that for goal-oriented classroom learning, students must feel safe, connected, and share the same goals, combined with a caring environment led by the teacher. Thus, the ability to express oneself arises without fear and anxiety. Second, intrinsic factors bring out positive aspects. It can be seen from the students' said such as "It's needed to improve self-quality", "It's for work needs", "To be able to work in various countries", "For travelling". The excerpts confirms that students learn English consciously and without coercion. They know that learning English is not just a

requirement but also a necessity. This is in line with Seedhouse (1995) which stated that students were aware of their learning needs. In brief, they aware of their personal interests which make them challenged and enthusiastic to improve their English abilities. Certainly, the improvement in their English proficiency has benefited their future. From those discussion, it can be concluded that successful language learning must aware to the students' needs. Then, it is followed by fulfilling teaching methods that attract the students' interests. Thus, the length of time study English will have a positive impact on the students' future needs.

Students' Speaking Skill

Findings shows that 85.9% of the students agreed to improve their speaking ability since they realized that English was important to use in global communication.

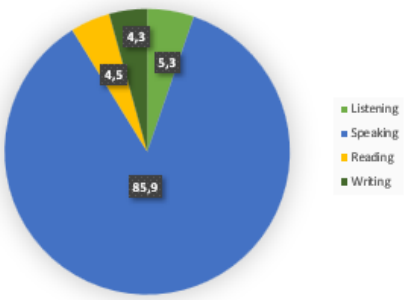


Figure 3: English Skills (%)

Seeing the finding above, it is also necessary to look at their learning style. Learning style is very important in the learning process. This is intended that learning needs can be met. The learning style indicates how the students meet their learning needs so they are able to improve their English abilities, mainly speaking. Related to that, some of the students expressed that:

"Listen to English songs. Then, sing the song by imitating the singer's accent"

"Try to speak English, especially when alone"

"Mixing two languages (Indonesian-English) when communicating with friends"

Those expressions illustrate that students have made various efforts to gain their goals. Those activities support that the students aware of the importance of speaking abilities and they prefer doing activities which improve their speaking instead of other activities such as rule-based learning. They also realized that speaking is an ability that must be trained and cannot be transferred. Those intrinsic factors must be explored. Of

course, the extrinsic factors also need to be addressed so their speaking abilities become better. Referring to previous findings in students' background, extrinsic factors are not yet optimal.

To help the students achieve their goals, several topics offered were chosen by them. The topics were introduction, telling time, describing objects/people, telling locations, talking about work, and talking about opinions. 42 students chose talking about opinion and this was the most needed topic. Then, it continued by talking about jobs (34 students) and telling location (23 students).

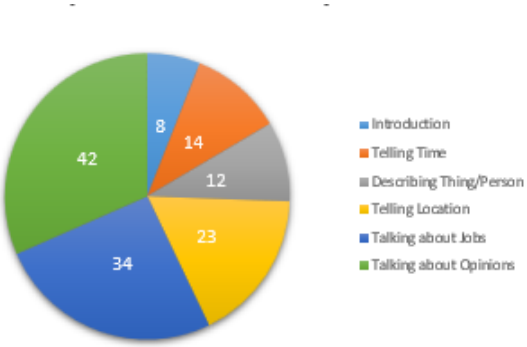


Figure 4: Topic Material chosen by Students

It is not surprising that the students chose talking about opinion. The topic is not only used in work life but also in daily communication, particularly in discussion time. Another important thing of talking about opinion is that giving an opinion means giving thoughts, views, and agreements based on the problem being discussed. (O'Reilly et al., 2022) added that opinion is the main signal that provides information. It can be a basis for identification. Regarding the topics, the students also declared other materials they want to learn so that their speaking abilities become more advanced. Most of them asked about public speaking and presentations. This makes sense because those align with their communication skill and future needs. In brief, the phenomenon confirms that the students actually know their needs.

Learning Method

Findings confirmed that combining project-based learning (PjBL) and case study learning methods are really needed in the learning process (54.9%). It means that the two methods can be implemented simultaneously.

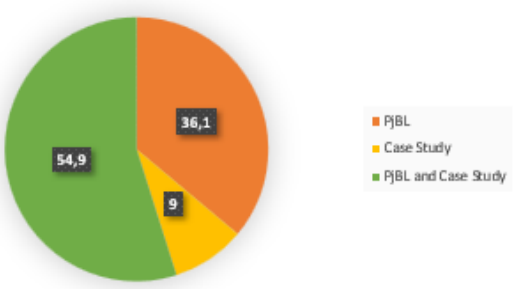


Figure 5: Learning Method Preference (%)

The finding is also supported by several statements that both two methods:

"make me motivated to improve my English"

"make me understand the English material better"

"help me develop ideas"

"help me explore myself"

"make me more active in learning English"

"help me speak English though I am not fluent yet"

Those findings depict that the method gives a positive impact on the students' learning process. The students became more excited. In addition, feelings of anxiety and fear begin to disappear. PjBL is a teaching strategy that offers students an opportunity to develop their real-life skills. (Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021) support that PjBL focuses on learning by doing, experimenting, problem solving, teamwork, social skills, understanding, collaboration and partnership, and taking responsibility. Furthermore, the students' analytical skills were trained through case study. This case study can be tailored for activities related to the topic of talking about opinion. The activities can be expressed in the form of role play. In line with (Roell, 2019), case study makes students more active in solving a problem than reading a text and answering questions. The method allows them to train their communication skills in the second language using their analytical skill.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed that an important part of second language learning is when learners are able to practice in different contexts. In this case, it is to improve speaking ability. Students' limited vocabulary and stigma regarding correct English grammar

were found to be the main sources of their speaking anxiety. For EFL learners, speaking occupies the most important language skill to be mastered, especially for international communication. It cannot be denied that speaking is the most stressful skill among the four language skills. The lack of opportunities to speak the language became their limitation. As a result, they often feel anxious and afraid when they are required to communicate in English.

REFERENCES

Aisyah, N., Moon, P., Otoluwa, H., & Machmud, K. (2018). *The Portrait of Students' Need for English Speaking Materials in Nursing Vocational School*. *July*, 12–14.

Ali, Z., Masroor, F., & Khan, T. (2020). Creating Positive Classroom Environment For Learners' Motivation Towards Communicative Competence in The English Language. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, *57*, 317–328. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339933617

Aliki, K., Makrina-Nina, Z., & Panagiota, D. (2021). *2 Journal of English Literature and Language A Needs Analysis Questionnaire: Designing and Evaluation*. 1–9.

Cahyono, B. Y., & Widiati, U. (2015). the Teaching of Efl Listening in the Indonesian Context: the State of the Art. *TEFLIN Journal - A Publication on the Teaching and Learning of English*, *20*(2), 194. https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v20i2/194-211

Chatzikyriakou, M., & Zafiri, M. (2019). Needs Analysis in EFL Teaching in Greece: The Teachers' Stance. *Education and Linguistics Research*, *5*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.5296/elr.v5i1.14191

De Dios, J., & Agudo, M. (2013). *An Investigation into Spanish EFL Learners' Anxiety Um estudo da ansiedade em estudantes espanhóis de EFL*. *13*(3), 829–851.

Farhani, A. R., Binsasi, Y. N., & Handayani, A. (2020). English-Speaking Issues Towards Indonesia Senior High School Students. *Seminar Nasional Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Multi Disiplin 3 (SNIPMD)*, 442–446.

Ghosheh Wahbeh, D., Najjar, E. A., Sartawi, A. F., Abuzant, M., & Daher, W. (2021). The role of project-based language learning in developing students' life skills. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *13*(12), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126518

Huda, M. F. N. (2020). The Needs Analysis of EFL Students at Arrahmaniyah Depok. *Journal of English Educational Study* , *3*(1), 31–41.

Mahripa, S. (2014). The Third Uad Tefl International Conference Proceedings " ELT Materials Development in Asia and Beyond: Directions, Issues, and Challenges ".

"ELT Materials Development in Asia and Beyond: Directions, Issues, and Challenges," 1037. http://staffnew.uny.ac.id/upload/132309874/penelitian/UTIC 2014_Siti Mahripah.pdf

Menggo, S., Suastra, I. M., Budiarsa, M., & Padmadewi, N. N. (2019). Needs analysis of academic-English speaking material in promoting 21 st century skills. *International Journal of Instruction*, *12*(2), 739–754. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12247a

O'Reilly, C., Maher, P. J., Lüders, A., & Quayle, M. (2022). Sharing is caring: How sharing opinions online can connect people into groups and foster identification. *Acta Psychologica*, *230*(February), 103751. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103751

Robinett, B. W., Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1988). English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach. *The Modern Language Journal*, *72*(1), 73. https://doi.org/10.2307/327576

Roza, M. (2013). Esp Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Di Ptai. *Ijtimaiyya*, *6*(2), 143–156.

Sri Andayani, E. (2022). The Importance of Learning and Knowing English in Higher Education in Indonesia. *Research and Development Journal Of Education*, *8*(1), 372–379. http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/rdje.v8i1.13315

Sularti, Drajati, N. A., & Supriyadi, S. (2019). Students ' needs analysis on learning of the english listening skills in vocational high school. *English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings*, *3*, 244–249.

Warohma, E., Rohmah, A., & Kurniati, N. (2022). *Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Pendidikan Dasar 2 (SENSASEDA) 2 STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin Need Analysis Of English Speaking Material For Students In Islamic Boarding SchooL*. *2*(November), 247–257.