

## ***A STUDY ON ENGLISH STUDENTS DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING SKILL***

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this research is to find out the difficulties faced by the fourth-semester students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau in speaking skill. This research used descriptive quantitative method. In collecting data, the researcher used a closed questionnaire and 5 point Likert-scale to determine the factors that cause students' difficulties in speaking. The survey consists of eight indicators; vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation and lack of confidence. The sample of this research was 71 students of fourth-semester students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau. The questionnaire was accessed by the students online via Google Forms. According to the results, Shyness (69.58%) is the most common speaking difficulty in very difficult criteria, whereas Lack of Motivation (59.86%) is the least common speaking difficulty in difficult criteria.*

**Key Words:** *Speaking Skill, Speaking Difficulties, English Students.*

# **STUDI TENTANG KESULITAN MAHASISWA BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM KETERAMPILAN BERBICARA**

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa semester keempat Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau dalam keterampilan berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif. Dalam mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan kuesioner tertutup dan skala Likert 5 poin untuk menentukan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan siswa dalam berbicara. Survei ini terdiri dari delapan indikator; kosakata, pengucapan, kelancaran, tata bahasa, kecemasan, rasa malu, kurangnya motivasi dan kurangnya kepercayaan diri. Sampel penelitian ini terdiri dari 71 siswa dari siswa semester keempat Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau. Siswa dapat mengaksesnya secara online melalui Google Forms. Menurut hasil penelitian, rasa malu (69.58%) adalah kesulitan berbicara yang paling umum dalam kriteria yang sangat sulit, sedangkan kurangnya motivasi (59.86%) merupakan kesulitan bicara yang paling jarang terjadi kriteria yang sulit.

**Kata Kunci:** Keterampilan Berbicara, Kesulitan Berbicara, Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is the fundamental aspect of communication and is inseparable from the human experience. It can be a bridge connecting humans from different languages and cultures. Humans use language to express emotions, react to occurrences at various times, exchange thoughts, and criticize. Speaking is the primary source of exposing language and the easiest way of communicating. Speaking is a language skill that enables people to express their ideas or information to others in spoken form. For most people the spoken language is the main source of exposure to language and it thus the main engine for language change and dynamism (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

Although speaking is considered a main language skill that students should improve, it has been widely noticed that they face many difficulties in speaking English. When it comes to speaking ability, particularly in English, there are many problems that need to be considered. For instance, mistakes in pronunciation, lack of confidence in speaking, lack of ideas, grammatical errors, and the last is a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, Al-Roud (2016) suggests that most people who learn English have the thought that they want to develop proficiency in speaking skills, even though it is a difficult task. Speaking strategies also need to be learned in order to avoid miscommunication or distraction when communicating. Meanwhile, speaking is the ability to orally express our ideas, feelings, thoughts, and needs (Hornby, 1995). In this statement, it can be identified that speaking skills play an important role in communication and also in the process of language learning.

From the four English language skills, the speaking ability of English Study Program students must be better because they learn English deeper than others every day. The fourth-semester students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau have been taught Speaking from the first semester to the third semester; they are Speaking 1, Speaking 2, and Speaking 3. In the Speaking course, the students are expected to be able to speak naturally and fluently. In fact, achieving fluency in speaking is not easy. Students are not only demanded to use grammar correctly or have good pronunciation and vocabulary; they are also required to have knowledge of how to use the language. Hinkel (2005) claims that communication problems occur because the learner encounters a word they do not understand, a form of word they do not know how to use, or finds that they are unable to express their intended meaning.

Since the second year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau are the English Foreign Learners, they may face certain problems that keep themselves cannot speak English better. For instance, from the previous research, Shen (2019) finds that the problem of speaking in English major students are consist of two aspects; linguistics and psychological. Linguistics problems divided to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Psychological problems consist of fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and motivation.

Based on the background of the research above, the researcher conducted research entitled “A Study on English Students’ Difficulties in Speaking Skill”.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive quantitative research. Quantitative research is an interrelated set of constructs (or variables) formed into propositions, or hypotheses, that specify the relationship among variables (typically in terms of magnitude or direction)

(Creswell, 2018). The population of this research was the four-semester students of the English Study Program of Universitas Riau. The participants were 71 students. The researcher used a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data. The questionnaires of this research were presented using Likert scale to get information from participant. According to Bertram (2006), Likert scale is a psychometric response scale primarily used in questionnaires to obtain participants' preferences or degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements. The responses from the questionnaire was analyze by perceiving the mostly checked item in the scale. A Likert scale with five possible answers—one for strongly disagreeing, two for disagreeing, three for neutral, four for agreeing, and five for strongly agreeing—was used for the questionnaire's thirty items. There are eight indications in the questionnaire. Questions 1, 2, 3 ask about vocabulary; questions 4, 5, 6 ask about pronunciation; questions 7, 8, 9 ask about fluency; questions 10, 11, 12 ask about grammar; questions 13, 14, 15 ask about anxiety; question 16 ask about shyness; questions 17 & 18 ask about lack of motivation; and questions 19 & 20 ask about lack of confidence.

**Table 1. The Specification of the Questionnaire**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Questions No.</b>
Students' Difficulties in Speaking Skill	Vocabulary	1,2,3
	Pronunciation	4,5,6
	Fluency	7,8,9
	Grammar	10,11,12
	Anxiety	13,14,15
	Shyness	16,
	Lack of Motivation	17,18
	Lack of Confidence	19,20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The results of this study answered the research question about the speaking difficulties faced by the fourth-semester students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau. From this study, the result shows that Shyness (69.58%) is the most common speaking difficulty in very difficult criteria and Lack of Motivation (59.86%) is the least common speaking difficulty in difficult criteria.

**Table 2. Score of Questionnaire**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Vocabulary	737	69.20%	Very Difficult
Pronunciation	716	67.23%	Difficult
Fluency	729	68.45%	Very Difficult
Grammar	722	67.79%	Difficult
Anxiety	690	64.79%	Difficult
Shyness	247	69.58%	Very Difficult
Lack of Motivation	425	59.86%	Difficult
Lack of Confidence	432	60.85%	Difficult

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of the questionnaire, which was taken from 71 fourth-semester students in the English Study Program at Universitas Riau for the academic year 2022-2023, this research was conducted through a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions on eight indicators of students' difficulties in speaking skills. There are vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, and lack of confidence.

The result of this research shows the first indicator, "Vocabulary," has 69.20% of students who meet the very difficult criteria of difficulty in vocabulary when speaking English. Next, from the indicator "Pronunciation," the total score from the result is 716. "Pronunciation" has 67.23% of students who meet the criteria of difficulty in pronunciation when speaking English. Then, from the indicator "Fluency," the total score from the result is 729. It can be concluded that the third indicator, "Fluency," has 68.45% of students who meet the very difficult criteria of difficulty in fluency in speaking English. The fourth indicator is "Grammar." The total score from the result is 722. "Grammar" has 67.79% of students who meet the criteria of difficulty in grammar when speaking English. Then, from the indicator "Anxiety," the total score from the result is 716. The indicator "Anxiety" has 64.79% of students who meet the criteria of difficulty in speaking English. The sixth indicator is "Shyness." The total score from the result shows that 67.23% of students who meet the very difficult criteria of difficulty in speaking English are shy. Next, from the indicator "Lack of Motivation," the total score from the result is 425. It can be concluded that the indicator "Lack of Motivation" has 59.86% of students who meet the criteria of difficulty in lack of motivation in speaking skill. Last, from the indicator "Lack of Confidence," the total score from the result shows 60.86% of students who are in the difficult category of difficulty in lack of confidence in speaking English.

As a comparison as related studies, Ramadhan (2018) concluded there were some difficulties experienced by students in public speaking namely panic, lack of confident, nervous, lack of understanding material, forget the words, can't speak loudly, look less attractive, cannot answer the audience's questions properly and correctly. Second, Azizah (2015) used qualitative research. The results of the study showed factors contributing to students' difficulties in speaking were that students prefer to speak in mother tongue rather than English, they are lazy to read and learn new words, they did not have motivation and the teachers' teaching style was also one of the factors contributing to students' difficulties in speaking English. The next is from Jannah (2022), which showed that the fourth semester students' English Department at the

University of Pasir Pangaraian's' difficulties speaking were most likely due to a lack of vocabulary and, at least, that students tend to use “native” language when they are speaking English. The last is from Fhonna (2023), who indicated that students face various challenges in speaking English. They encountered obstacles in grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Based on the results, this research found that the percentage of the questionnaire is in the very difficult category. The highest percentage is shyness (69.58%), vocabulary (69.20%), then fluency (68.45%), grammar (67.69%), pronunciation (67.23%), anxiety (64.79%), lack of confidence (60.85%), and lack of motivation (59.86%). The researcher determined the students' difficulties in speaking skills in the English Study Program at Universitas Riau. So, from the result of this research, it can be concluded that the students' difficulties in speaking skill at the fourth-semester of the English Study Program at Universitas Riau meet difficult criteria.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the data analysis, the fourth-semester English students at English Study Program Universitas Riau had found that the score of percentage is in interval from 52% - 67% and 68% - 83%. It means students' difficulties in speaking English are in difficult and very difficult criteria. The most common speaking difficulty faced by the fourth-semester students of English Study Program Universitas Riau is Shyness with the percentage (69.58%) in ‘very difficult’ criteria and the least common speaking difficulty is Lack of Motivation with the percentage (59.86%) in ‘difficult’ criteria.

### **Recommendations**

According to this research, the researcher would like to offer several recommendations:

1. The students should memorize the vocabulary so they can speak more about what they need. The students also should confidence about themselves and practice more and more. Students should try to speak enjoyed with partner, so they can utterance what they want to speak.
2. Teacher or lecture should give students in English Study Program more practice in speaking and experiences to speak English all the time. It is recommended that lecture understand the students' interests and feelings in order to select the most effective teaching method.
3. For further research, this research can be a reference to do research with using other variables, sample, or size, and method can improve in speaking English.

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