

**ENGLISH SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY AT
TRIDINANTI UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis by

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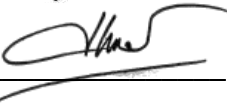
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LETTER STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is an essential skill for effective communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL); however, many university students continue to experience difficulties in oral communication. This study aimed to identify the level of English speaking difficulties and determine the most dominant aspect experienced by undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridinanti University. A descriptive quantitative study employing a cross-sectional survey design was conducted involving 130 undergraduate students selected through total sampling. Data were collected using an adopted questionnaire consisting of four dimensions: affective, linguistic, social, and instructional aspects. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed that the students experienced a **moderate** level of English speaking difficulties, with an overall mean score of **35.02**, which falls within the moderate category. Among the four dimensions, the **affective aspect** was identified as the most dominant difficulty ($M = 3.29$), followed by the linguistic ($M = 3.02$) and social ($M = 2.98$) aspects, whereas the instructional aspect recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 2.54$). These findings suggest that psychological factors constitute the most prominent challenge to students' English speaking performance. Therefore, lecturers are encouraged to implement supportive learning environments and confidence-building speaking activities to reduce students' anxiety and promote more effective oral communication.

Keywords: *English speaking, Student difficulties level, aspect of difficulties*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents (1) background of the study, (2) the limitations of the Study, (3) formulation of the problem, (4) the objectives of the study, and (5) significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is widely recognized as an international language that plays a significant role in global communication. English was used in various fields such as education, science, technology, business, and international relations. The widespread use of English has made it an important language for people who wish to participate in global interactions. According to Galloway and Numajiri (2020, p. 119) English has become a global language because it is used extensively across different countries and cultures. As a result, many educational institutions around the world include English as an important subject in their curricula. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language to help students develop their ability to communicate in an increasingly interconnected world.

In the Indonesian educational context, English is taught from secondary schools to higher education institutions. University students are expected to possess adequate English proficiency because many academic references, journals, and learning resources are published in English. Rana and Shaikh (2024) argue that English proficiency provides learners with broader access to knowledge and

international communication. Therefore, mastering English is not only beneficial for academic purposes but also for professional development. Students who have good English skills are generally better prepared to compete in the global workforce and pursue further educational opportunities.

English language learning involves four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and contribute to overall language competence. Among them, speaking is often considered one of the most important skills because it enables learners to communicate their ideas directly with others. Dwi Anggini and Arjulayana (2020) state that speaking is a productive skill that allows learners to express thoughts, feelings, and information through oral communication. Through speaking, students can participate in discussions, presentations, and other communicative activities. Therefore, speaking competence is an essential component of successful language learning.

Speaking is a complex skill because it requires learners to integrate several language components simultaneously. Learners need to apply vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency while communicating in real time. According to Ratnasari, (2020), speaking involves producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning effectively. Unlike writing, speaking often occurs spontaneously and provides little time for learners to plan or revise their language production. Consequently, many learners find speaking more challenging than other language skills. The complexity of speaking makes it one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for EFL students.

For undergraduate students, especially those in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, speaking ability is particularly important. As future educators, they are expected to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings. They may be required to deliver presentations, participate in discussions, explain concepts, and interact with students and colleagues. Effective speaking skills can support their confidence and teaching performance. Furthermore, good communication skills are often associated with academic success and professional competence. Therefore, speaking ability should receive considerable attention in higher education.

Despite the importance of speaking, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties when speaking English. Even after years of learning English, students often struggle to express themselves effectively in oral communication. According to Ur (1996), Putri et al. (2020), Saputra (2020) and Ghafar et al. (2022), speaking difficulties commonly arise because learners experience inhibition, lack of ideas, low or uneven participation, and frequent use of the mother tongue. These difficulties may prevent students from communicating confidently and actively. As a result, learners may become reluctant to participate in speaking activities and miss opportunities to improve their speaking skills.

One of the major difficulties experienced by EFL learners is inhibition. Ur (1996), Arifin (2017), Abrar et al. (2018), Sevinç et al. (2019) and Trinh and Pham (2021), explain that learners often feel worried about making mistakes, being criticized, or losing face in front of others. Such concerns can create psychological barriers that discourage students from speaking. When learners feel anxious about

their performance, they tend to remain silent rather than risk making errors. This situation may reduce classroom interaction and limit opportunities for language practice. Consequently, inhibition becomes a significant obstacle to the development of speaking proficiency.

In addition to inhibition, linguistic problems also contribute to speaking difficulties. Normawati et al., (2023, p. 7-8) notes that learners frequently encounter challenges related to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency when speaking English. Limited vocabulary may prevent students from expressing their ideas clearly, while insufficient grammar knowledge can lead to inaccurate communication. Pronunciation difficulties may affect intelligibility and make communication less effective. Furthermore, a lack of fluency may cause hesitation and interruptions during speech. These linguistic problems often reduce students' confidence and speaking performance.

Psychological aspects also play an important role in influencing students' speaking ability. According to Nunan (2003), Nasution (2022) and Darajat (2025), the concept of foreign language anxiety, which refers to feelings of tension, nervousness, and apprehension associated with language learning situations. Students who experience high levels of anxiety often avoid speaking activities because they fear making mistakes or receiving negative evaluations. Anxiety can negatively affect learners' concentration, confidence, and communication performance. Therefore, understanding the psychological aspects of speaking difficulties is essential for improving students' speaking competence.

Recent studies have shown that speaking difficulties are influenced by multiple aspects. Quoc Thao and Thi Nhu Nguyet (2019) classify English speaking difficulties into four aspects: affective difficulties, social difficulties, instructional difficulties, and linguistic difficulties. Affective difficulties include anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Social difficulties relate to interaction with classmates and opportunities for communication. Instructional difficulties involve teaching methods and classroom environments, while linguistic difficulties refer to problems with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. These aspects provide a comprehensive framework for understanding speaking difficulties among EFL learners.

The existence of speaking difficulties can have significant consequences for students' academic performance. Learners who experience difficulties in speaking may become passive during classroom activities and participate less frequently in discussions or presentations. According to Brown (2001) and Brown and Lee (2025), active communication is an important element in language acquisition because it allows learners to practice and develop their language skills. When students avoid speaking opportunities, their progress in language learning may be limited. Consequently, speaking difficulties can hinder both academic achievement and language development.

At Tridinanti University, undergraduate students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education are expected to develop English communication skills as part of their academic preparation. However, students may encounter various challenges when speaking English in classroom activities, presentations, and

discussions. Some students may struggle with vocabulary and grammar, while others may experience anxiety or lack confidence when speaking. These difficulties may affect their ability to communicate effectively in English. Therefore, investigating students' speaking difficulties is important to obtain a clearer understanding of the challenges they face.

Although many studies have investigated English speaking difficulties in different educational contexts, findings may vary depending on learners' backgrounds and learning environments. Thao and Nguyet (2019) emphasize that speaking difficulties may differ across institutions due to differences in educational settings, teaching practices, and learner characteristics. Therefore, it is important to conduct studies in specific contexts to obtain accurate information about students' speaking difficulties. Research conducted at Tridianti University could provide valuable insights into the particular challenges experienced by its undergraduate students.

Based on the explanations above, it was necessary to investigate English speaking difficulties among undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the level of English speaking difficulties experienced by the students and determine the most dominant aspect of those difficulties. By employing a quantitative research design, the study provided objective and measurable data regarding students' speaking difficulties. The findings contributed to a better understanding of the difficulties experienced by the students and may help lecturers develop more effective strategies to support students' speaking development.

Furthermore, the results may serve as useful references for future researchers who are interested in similar topics.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

1.2.1 The Limitation of Research

This study was limited to investigating English speaking difficulties among undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University. The study focused on four aspects of speaking difficulties, namely affective, linguistic, social, and instructional difficulties. Therefore, the findings were confined to the participants and context of this study.

1.2.2 The Formulation of Problems

Based on the explanation above, the research problems were formulated in the following questions:

- a. What level of English speaking difficulties did undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University have?
- b. What was the most dominant aspect of English speaking difficulties encountered by undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems of the research, the objectives of study were as follows:

- a. To know the level of English speaking difficulties among undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University.

- b. To find out the dominant aspects of difficulties in English speaking encountered by Undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University.

1.4 The Significance of Study

The findings of this study provided useful information about English speaking difficulties experienced by undergraduate students of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridianti University.

- a. For Students

This study may help students gain a better understanding of the difficulties they experience when speaking English. By recognizing these difficulties, students may become more aware of the areas that need improvement and develop greater confidence in using English for communication.

- b. For Teachers

The findings of this study may help lecturers gain a clearer understanding of the speaking difficulties experienced by students. This understanding can support lecturers in designing more effective learning activities and creating a supportive learning environment that encourages students to improve their English speaking skills.

- c. For the Researcher

This study provides valuable experience for the researcher in conducting educational research, particularly in investigating students' English speaking difficulties. It also helps broaden the researcher's understanding of the challenges faced by EFL learners in developing speaking skills.

d. For Other Researchers

This study may serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in investigating English speaking difficulties among EFL learners. It may also provide useful information for conducting similar studies in different educational contexts, populations, or research designs.

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