



**CLASSROOM SPEAKING
DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGIES
EMPLOYED BY SIXTH-SEMESTER
ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS**



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SN.20522117

2026

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STUDENTS**

A THESIS

**Submitted to fulfill one of the requirements for *Sarjana*
Pendidikan Degree in English Education**



By:

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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K.H ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN**

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2026

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI DAN PENGGUNAAN BANTUAN KECERDASAN ARTIFISIAL

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

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Ahmad Fa'iq Mahmudi
NIM. 20522117

NOTA PEMBIMBING

Kepada
Yth. Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan
UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan
c/q. Ketua Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris
di Pekalongan

Assalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

Setelah melakukan penelitian, bimbingan dan koreksi
naskah skripsi saudara:

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Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat
diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN
K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diujikan dalam
sidang munaqasyah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk
digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya,
disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb

Pekalongan, 29 Juni 2026

Pembimbing



Isriani Hardini, M. A, Ph.D.
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MOTTO AND ACKNOLEGMENTS

“Speaking is difficult, it needs strategies to overcome it. I want to know both”

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT for his endless mercy and blessings. Without his guidance and grace, this academic achievement would not have been realized. Peace and blessings be upon my Prophet Muhammad SAW. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who has provided support and contributed to my studies.

1. First and foremost, I would like to thanks to my beloved parents, Mr. Riyanto and Mrs. Murti, who have continuously provided me with motivation, prayer, and support from the very beginning to the end of my academic journey.
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ABSTRAK

Mahmudi, A. F. (2026). Classroom Speaking Difficulties and Strategies Employed by Sixth-Semester English Education Students. Skripsi. Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris. Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan. UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Pembimbing : Isriani Hardini, M.A., Ph.D.

Kata Kunci: kesulitan berbicara, strategi berbicara, mahasiswa EFL, studi kasus

Kemampuan berbicara merupakan salah satu keterampilan penting yang harus dikuasai oleh mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris karena berkaitan dengan kompetensi akademik dan profesional mereka sebagai calon guru bahasa Inggris. Namun, banyak mahasiswa masih mengalami berbagai kesulitan ketika berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris di lingkungan kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kesulitan berbicara yang dialami oleh mahasiswa semester enam Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris serta strategi berbicara yang mereka gunakan untuk mengatasi kesulitan berbicara selama kegiatan berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Partisipan penelitian terdiri atas empat mahasiswa semester enam yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling berdasarkan keterlibatan aktif dalam kegiatan berbicara di kelas serta kesediaan mereka untuk berbagi pengalaman. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi nonpartisipan dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami dua kelompok kesulitan berbicara, yaitu kesulitan linguistik dan kesulitan psikologis. Kesulitan linguistik meliputi keterbatasan kosakata, kesulitan tata bahasa, dan kesulitan pengucapan, sedangkan kesulitan psikologis meliputi rasa takut melakukan kesalahan, rasa malu dan kurang percaya diri, serta fluktuasi motivasi. Meskipun menghadapi berbagai kesulitan tersebut, para partisipan tetap

menunjukkan motivasi yang tinggi untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara mereka. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa mahasiswa menggunakan berbagai strategi berbicara untuk mengatasi kesulitan berbicara, yaitu strategi langsung, strategi tidak langsung, serta strategi interaksional. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi berbicara telah digunakan untuk membantu mahasiswa mengatasi kesulitan berbicara.



ABSTRACT

Mahmudi, A. F. (2026). Classroom Speaking Difficulties and Strategies Employed by Sixth-Semester English Education Students. Undergraduate Thesis. English Education Study Program. Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training. UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

Advisor : Isriani Hardini, M.A., Ph.D.

Keywords: speaking difficulties, speaking strategies, EFL students, case study

Speaking is one of the essential language skills that English Education students are expected to master because it is closely related to their academic performance and future professional responsibilities as prospective English teachers. Nevertheless, many students continue to experience difficulties when speaking English in classroom settings. This study aimed to identify the speaking difficulties experienced by third-year English Education students and the speaking strategies they employed to overcome speaking difficulties during English-speaking activities. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. The participants consisted of four third-year English Education students selected through purposive sampling based on their active participation in classroom speaking activities and their willingness to share their experiences. Data were collected through non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the students experienced two major categories of speaking difficulties: linguistic and psychological difficulties. The linguistic difficulties included vocabulary limitations, grammar difficulties, and pronunciation difficulties, while the psychological difficulties consisted of fear of making mistakes, shyness and lack of confidence, and motivational fluctuations. Despite these challenges, the participants generally demonstrated strong motivation to improve their English-speaking ability. The study also found that the

participants employed various speaking strategies to overcome speaking difficulties, including direct strategies, indirect strategies, and interactional strategies. These findings indicate that speaking strategies was used by the students to overcome speaking difficulties.



PREFACE

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah SWT., the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for His endless blessings, mercy, and guidance. By His grace, the researcher was able to complete this undergraduate thesis entitled **“Classroom Speaking Difficulties and Strategies Employed by Sixth-Semester English Education Students”** This thesis is submitted as one of the requirements for obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Education at the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW. May we all receive his intercession on the Day of Judgment. Ameen.

This undergraduate thesis could not have been completed without the assistance, guidance, and support of many individuals. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude and the highest appreciation to:

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8. To all my beloved friends and fellow students, I would like to express my thanks and pride for having you all as companions in my academic journey, including all of the English Education Department students of 2022.

The researcher realizes that this undergraduate thesis is far from perfect due to various limitations in both its content and presentation. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are sincerely welcomed for the improvement of this work. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide valuable insights and contribute to the development of English language teaching and learning in the future.

Pekalongan, 9 Juli 2026

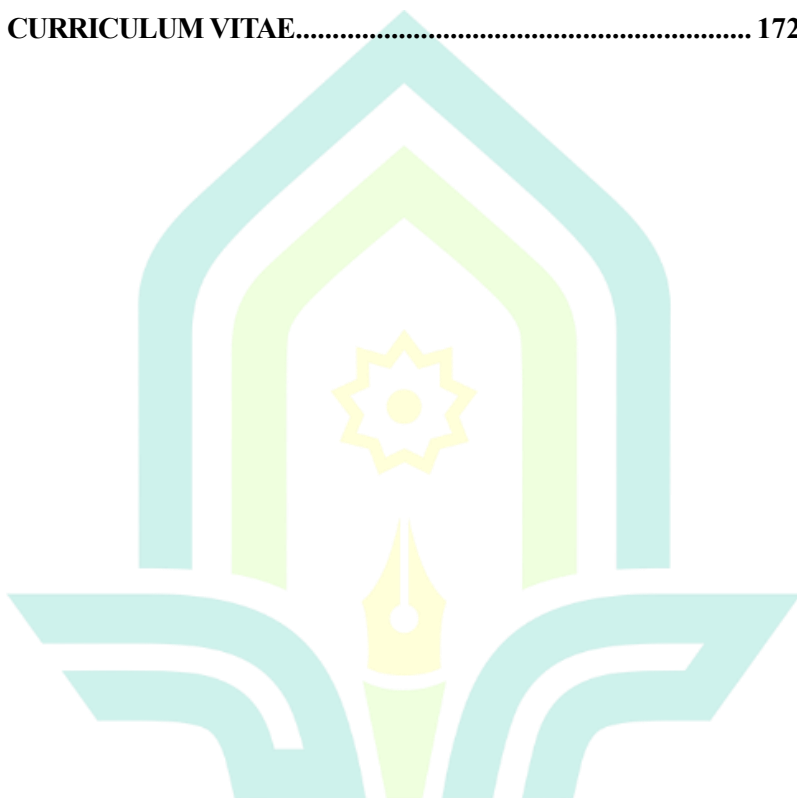
The Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Speaking is a crucial skill in learning English because it enables students to express ideas, exchange information, and participate in both academic and social interaction (Brown, 2007). Through speaking, students are expected to express their thoughts clearly and interact with others. However, speaking is also considered a highly challenging language skill because students must use vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency simultaneously while responding spontaneously during interaction (Goh & Burns, 2012). Although English has been taught from elementary school to university in Indonesia, students still experience persistent difficulties in speaking English (Robah & Anggrisia, 2023). Therefore, speaking remains an essential but challenging skill for EFL Indonesian students.

A primary cause of speaking difficulties is restricted linguistic competence. According to Spolsky and Hult (2008), students frequently experience problems related to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which affect their ability to speak. Among these aspects, limited vocabulary is frequently the primary obstacle because students struggle to express their ideas when they cannot recall appropriate English words (Brown, 2007). Grammatical inaccuracies may cause students to produce incorrect sentences, while pronunciation problems reduce the clarity of their speech (Richards, 2008). As a result,

students routinely hesitate, pause, or avoid speaking activities because they are unsure of how to express their ideas in English (Octaberlina et al., 2022).

Besides linguistic problems, psychological and environmental dimensions also influence students' speaking performance. Indonesian EFL students frequently experience a fear of making mistakes, a lack of confidence, and speaking anxiety when speaking in English (Abrar et al., 2024). These psychological dynamics routinely prevent students from participating actively in classroom discussions even when they possess sufficient knowledge of the lesson. In addition, opportunities to practice English outside the classroom remain restricted, causing students to depend heavily on Indonesian in daily interaction (Ratnasari, 2020). Consequently, speaking difficulties are influenced not only by language knowledge but also by students' emotions and the learning environment.

Although students experience distinct speaking difficulties, they typically do not cease speaking completely. Instead, they employ unique speaking strategies to maintain conversations and express their ideas. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) classify speaking strategies into three categories: direct, indirect, and interactional strategies. Direct strategies help students overcome linguistic problems by replacing unfamiliar words or switching to another language. Indirect strategies help students gain time to think through fillers, repetition, or pausing without interrupting the conversational flow. Meanwhile, interactional strategies involve cooperation with other people, such as asking for help or requesting clarification.

Understanding these speaking strategies is important because they show how students actively deal with speaking problems while continuing to participate in classroom interaction.

Previous literature has investigated speaking difficulties and speaking strategies among Indonesian EFL students. However, existing research predominantly focuses on secondary school students or university students in general (Robah & Anggrisia, 2023). Sparse attention has been given specifically to sixth-semester English Education students, even though they are expected to use English regularly in classroom learning. In the sixth semester, English Education students take an Intercultural Communication course, in which English is used as the primary language for classroom interaction. During this course, students are encouraged to speak in English throughout discussions, presentations, and other classroom activities. This learning environment provides valuable opportunities to observe how sixth-semester English Education students speak in English and respond to speaking challenges in authentic classroom situations. Nevertheless, preliminary observation conducted by the researcher at a state university in Pekalongan showed that particular sixth-semester English Education students still experienced hesitation, a fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and regular switching to Indonesian during English-speaking activities. These observations indicate that speaking difficulties continue to exist despite the regular use of English in the classroom. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the

speaking difficulties experienced by sixth-semester English Education students and the speaking strategies they use in this particular learning context.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to investigate the classroom speaking difficulties faced by sixth-semester English Education students and the speaking strategies they use to overcome those difficulties. The study focuses on both linguistic and psychological dimensions as well as the direct, indirect, and interactional strategies employed during classroom interaction. Since sixth-semester English Education students regularly participate in the Intercultural Communication course, where English is used as the primary language of interaction, they provide an appropriate context for exploring authentic speaking difficulties and speaking strategies in the EFL classroom. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of these experiences, this study employs a qualitative case study design by collecting data through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for lecturers in creating supportive speaking activities, help sixth-semester English Education students become more aware of speaking strategies, and serve as a reference for future researchers interested in English-speaking in EFL classrooms.

1.2. Formulation of the Problems

This research addressed two research questions:

1. What are the speaking difficulties faced by the third-year English Education students?

2. What are the strategies used by the students to overcome their speaking difficulties?

1.3. Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are:

1. To identify and examine the speaking difficulties faced by the third-year English Education students.
2. To explore the strategies employed by these students to overcome their speaking difficulties.

1.4. Operational Definitions

To avoid any misunderstanding about the terms used in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1.4.1 Speaking difficulties

Speaking difficulties refer to the difficulties students experience when speaking English, which affect their fluency, accuracy, and confidence. These challenges arise from linguistic and psychological factors and are identified through interviews and classroom observations (Spolsky, 1988).

1.4.2 Speaking strategies

Speaking strategies are the techniques students use to overcome the difficulties during speaking. These include actions such as paraphrasing, using fillers, asking for help, or adjusting their message to maintain interaction and avoid communication breakdown (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

1.5. Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study enriched the theoretical understanding of difficulties and how to overcome them in English speaking activities, particularly in non-native contexts, contributing to the field of language education.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

It provided empirical evidence on the speaking difficulties and strategies by the sixth-semester English students in Indonesia, highlighting real-world barriers and strategies.

1.5.3 Practical Significance

The findings were expected to help lecturers identify students' speaking difficulties and understand the speaking strategies they used, so that classroom speaking activities could be designed to better support students' speaking activities.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

This study found that sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program experienced both linguistic and psychological difficulties during English classroom speaking activities. The linguistic difficulties included vocabulary limitations, grammar difficulties, and pronunciation difficulties. The students also experienced psychological difficulties, including fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, and motivation toward speaking practice. Although the participants generally demonstrated strong motivation to improve their English speaking ability, some acknowledged that maintaining this motivation consistently remained challenging. These findings indicate that speaking difficulties were influenced by both linguistic competence and psychological factors. Therefore, English speaking instruction should support not only students' language development but also their confidence and psychological readiness to speak in classroom settings.

This study also found that the students employed various speaking strategies to maintain the flow of speaking when encountering speaking difficulties. These strategies were categorized into direct strategies (circumlocution and code-switching), indirect strategies (fillers, self-repetition, and pausing), and interactional strategies (appeal for help and request for clarification). The participants selected different

strategies depending on the speaking difficulties they encountered, particularly when facing vocabulary limitations or uncertainty during classroom speaking activities. These findings suggest that speaking strategies play an important role in helping students continue speaking despite linguistic difficulties. Therefore, speaking strategy training may be incorporated into English speaking instruction to encourage students to speak more confidently and effectively during classroom speaking activities.

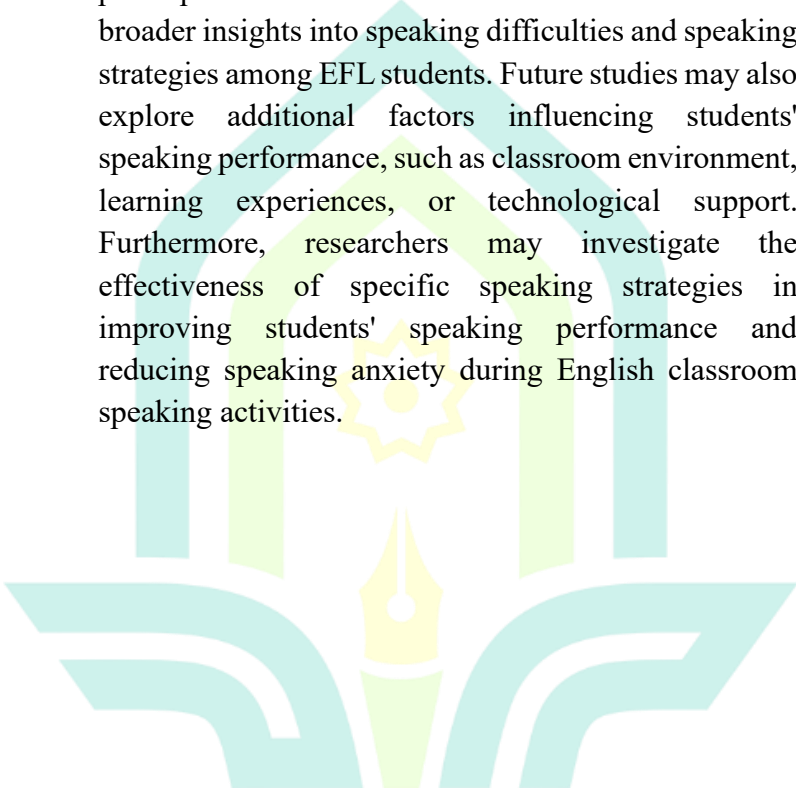
5.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. For lecturers, it is recommended to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment that reduces students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English. Lecturers may also provide more opportunities for interactive speaking activities, such as discussions, presentations, role plays, and collaborative tasks, to help students develop both speaking competence and confidence. In addition, explicit instruction on speaking strategies may assist students in managing speaking difficulties more effectively during classroom speaking activities.

For students, it is recommended to engage in regular speaking practice both inside and outside the classroom to improve vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and speaking confidence. Students are also encouraged to use speaking strategies appropriately when encountering speaking difficulties, as these strategies can help them continue speaking and reduce anxiety during classroom speaking activities.

Furthermore, increasing exposure to English through conversations, digital media, and other authentic language resources may contribute to the development of their speaking ability.

For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct studies involving a larger number of participants or different educational contexts to obtain broader insights into speaking difficulties and speaking strategies among EFL students. Future studies may also explore additional factors influencing students' speaking performance, such as classroom environment, learning experiences, or technological support. Furthermore, researchers may investigate the effectiveness of specific speaking strategies in improving students' speaking performance and reducing speaking anxiety during English classroom speaking activities.



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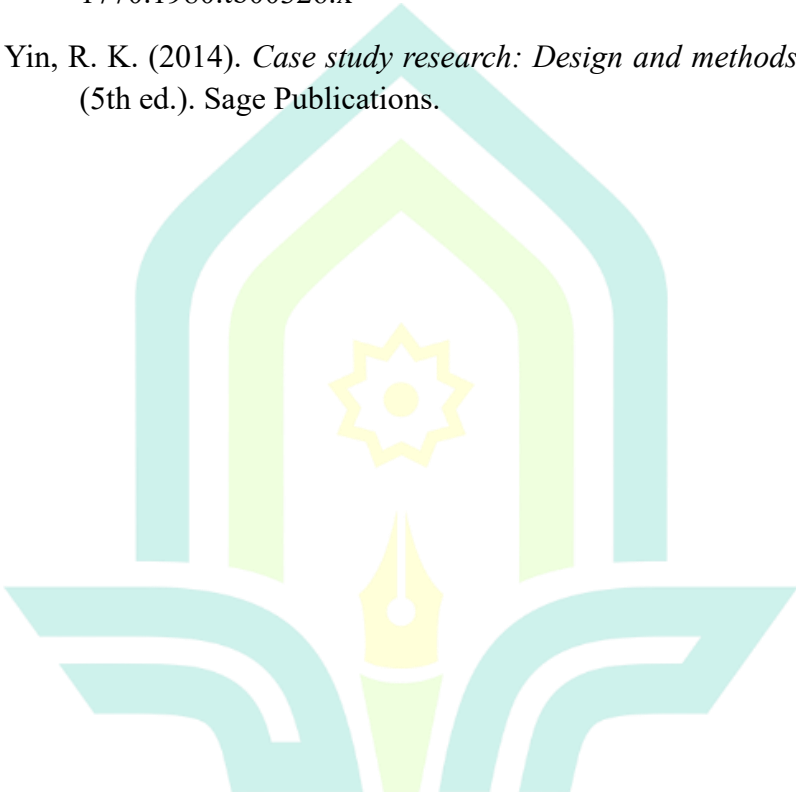
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